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THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

EDITED BY

JAMES HASTINGS, D.D.

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THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

EDITED BY THE REV.

JAMES HASTINGS, D.D.

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'THE EXPOSITORY TIMES,' 'THE DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE'
'THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS'
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THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

VOLUME I

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The aim of THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE is to preserve all that is worth preserving of the modern interpretation of the Bible. It is the thought rather than the expression that is retained, though the expression has not been rejected when it seemed worthy. So much, however, has been done in the way of condensing, re-arranging, re-writing, adding to, and illustrating, that the sources have not as a rule been given. But so far as these are published sermons, they will be found in the Index to Modern Sermons which accompanies each volume. THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE contains also much that is new, written by the Editor and others.

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THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

1. *The Author.*—The First Epistle to the Corinthians claims the Apostle Paul for its author, and only a perverse hypercriticism disputes the claim. Even Baur and the Tübingen critics, with all their historical rigorism, could not but allow that 1 Corinthians, along with 2 Corinthians, Romans, and Galatians is indubitably of Pauline origin. The external evidence is peculiarly distinct and copious. Clement of Rome in the first century, Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian are among the early writers who attest the Pauline authorship of the Epistle; and the Epistle is included in the best manuscripts and the chief versions of the New Testament as well as in Marcion's Canon and the Muratorian Canon. The internal evidence is also very strong. The Epistle bears within itself all the marks of reality, and it not only reflects the original mind and distinctive individuality of St Paul as he is portrayed in the Acts, but abounds in references that may be harmonized—for the most part readily—with all that appears in the Acts, in the other writings usually claimed for St Paul, and in the New Testament in general. Nor need the integrity of the Epistle as a whole be called in question. No doubt a word or a phrase may have crept in from the margin of the manuscript or been inserted by a copyist, but the occurrence in certain places of logical inconsistency or abrupt transition does not appear sufficiently to justify the hypothesis that the Epistle contains matter interpolated from other letters of St Paul to the Corinthian Churches.

2. *The Readers.*—The Epistle was written to 'The Church of God that is in Corinth' (i. 2). This was the new Corinth, the capital of the Roman province of Achaia and its busy commercial centre, whose cosmopolitan population was chiefly composed of Italians, Greeks, Jews, and Orientals. The Church there was founded by St Paul in the course of his second missionary journey (*cf.* Acts xviii.), and indeed the founding of it may be regarded as the crowning achievement of that great and notable enterprise. The Apostle had come on to Corinth from Athens 'in fear and in much trembling' (ii. 3). There Silas and Timothy joined him from Macedonia. As was his custom, St Paul preached the gospel of the Cross to the Jews first, setting forth Jesus to them as the Messiah of Israel. Opposed strongly and bitterly by the Jews, he turned to the Gentiles. Titus or, rather, Titius Justus, in whose house—close to the Synagogue—the Apostle now taught, may have been the first convert from among the Roman proselytes. The most important Jewish convert known to us was Crispus, the chief ruler of the Synagogue, whom St Paul baptized with his own hands (i. 14). For at least eighteen months the Apostle continued in Corinth, building up the local churches. In 1 Corinthians he tells us of the character of his preaching to the Corinthians: it was simple and direct, and not 'with enticing words of man's wisdom' (ii. 4), such as would have flattered his hearers, who were proud of their schools of rhetoric and philosophy and jealous of the superior reputation of Athens. It was probably soon after the abortive effort of the Jews to have him tried and condemned by Gallio, the Roman governor of Achaia, that the Apostle left Corinth. He does not appear to have visited the city again before he wrote 1 Corinthians.

But 1 Corinthians was not the first letter the Corinthians received from St Paul. In v. 9 there is a reference to an earlier letter: 'I wrote to you in my letter not to keep company with fornicators.' This earlier unrecorded letter may possibly, or even probably, be extant in fragmentary form in 2 Cor. vi. 14–vii. 1. Some would even find another fragment of it in 1 Cor. vi. 12-20. And just as an earlier letter preceded 1 Corinthians, so it would appear (*cf.* 2 Cor. ii. 4, vii. 8) that an earlier

letter similarly preceded 2 Corinthians. It is in fact commonly thought that 2 Corinthians virtually ends with the ninth chapter, and that the intermediate letter between the two canonical Epistles is partially preserved in 2 Cor. x. 1–xiii. 10. But the discussion of this question more properly belongs to the Introduction to 2 Corinthians.

From the correspondence of St Paul with the Corinthians we gain much insight into the social conditions of new Corinth, which appears to have maintained the reputation of the old as a home of faction, a seat of pleasure, and, in particular, a sink of iniquity. These things were bound to create difficult problems for the Christian missionaries, and there must have been strong inducements to counteract libertine tendencies in the converts by the inculcation of a too highly pitched asceticism. This is seen in our Epistle, which provides an instructive study in the contact of Christianity with paganism at its very focus and centre, and which has been characterized as 'the Epistle of the Cross in its social application.'

3. *The Place.*—It was in all probability at Ephesus that 1 Corinthians was written: 'I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost' (xvi. 8). This is further supported by xvi. 9, in which Aquila and Priscilla send salutations to the Corinthians; for they had come with St Paul from Corinth to Ephesus and had been left by him there (Acts xviii. 18, 19). Moreover, the Epistle was written shortly before an intended visit to Corinth on St Paul's part (iv. 19), and in Acts xx. 1, 2 we are told that after the close of his three years' ministry at Ephesus (Acts xx. 31) the Apostle visited Greece by way of Macedonia. Some think, however, that 1 Corinthians may have been written from Macedonia, when the Apostle went there after leaving Ephesus. In any case the Epistle belongs to the Ægean as distinguished from the Antiochean period of its author's career.

4. *The Date.*—The date of 1 Corinthians is bound up with Pauline chronology in general, as to which there is far from being agreement. But if we follow Dr C. H. Turner's much commended article on the 'Chronology of the New Testament' in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, then we should say that the Apostle's first visit to Corinth began late in A.D. 50 and ended early in A.D. 52, and that the three years' sojourn in Ephesus took place between A.D. 52 and A.D. 55; and accordingly 1 Corinthians would be written some time in A.D. 55, probably in the earlier months of that year.

5. *The Occasion.*—The occasion which called forth 1 Corinthians may be regarded as threefold: (1) News had reached St Paul through 'them of Chloe' (i. 11), and perhaps from other sources, concerning dissensions in the Corinthian Church. The Greek love of faction was already showing itself in the new religious community; there was a party that held by Paul, another by Apollos (who was apparently back in Ephesus when 1 Corinthians was written [*cf.* xvi. 12], and between whom and St Paul there seems to have been no dissension [*cf.* iv. 6, xvi. 12]), another by Cephas (this party was perhaps led by Jews who had known Peter in Palestine), and yet another by Christ (perhaps a party composed of advanced Judaisers led by one who claimed a closer connection with Christ than Paul could boast [*cf.* 2 Cor. x. 7, xi. 13]). On receipt of this disquieting news St Paul, who could not himself go at once to Corinth (xvi. 8, 9), nor persuade Apollos to go (xvi. 12), despatched the letter which we are now considering, of which chapters i.–iv. appear to arise out of the report of party factions, and chapter v. (a case of incest), chapter vi. 1-11 (litigation in heathen courts), and chapter vi. 12-20 (fornication) deal apparently with other serious matters reported to him. (2) At the same time the Apostle took occasion to answer certain questions which had been put to him in a recent letter from Corinth. The questions asked by the Corinthian Christians seem to be indicated, at least sometimes, by the formula 'now concerning,' which is recurrent in the Epistle (vii. 1, vii. 25, viii. 1, xii. 1, xvi. 1, xvi. 12). (3) The Apostle seems also to have dealt with reports brought by the bearers of the letter from Corinth (Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus [*cf.* xvi. 17, 18]); and if the recurrent formula 'now concerning' affords a precise indication of the contents of the letter from Corinth (questions concerning marriage, virgins, food offered to idols, spiritual gifts, the collection, Apollos), then the bearers' reports may have prompted the Apostle to treat of the other matters of the Epistle, namely, the veiling of women at public worship (xi. 2-16), the

Lord's Supper (xi. 17-34), and the Resurrection (xv.).

6. *The Character.*—The occasion of 1 Corinthians accounts largely for its character of comparative straightforwardness; it treats of problems and questions *seriatim,* moving rapidly and for the most part progressively towards a conclusion. It also accounts largely for its ethical and practical emphasis, although the doctrinal or dogmatic expositions and implications are of great importance, especially the treatment of the Resurrection. It serves also to give a vivid impression of the zeal and eagerness, the wisdom and tactfulness, the large-heartedness, the sincerity, the argumentative skill, and, in the nobly inspired thirteenth chapter, the poetic quality of soul of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. That the Epistle was written during St Paul's Ægean period may explain the difference between its style, which is rich and expressive, furnishing a characteristic specimen of Hellenistic Greek at its best, and the simple style of the Epistles to the Thessalonians. None the less 1 Corinthians still belongs to the first stage of Pauline theology, inasmuch as its doctrine is still subject to the apocalyptic motive.

7. *Analysis.*—It is also due to the occasion of the Epistle that its contents are readily divisible, both formally and materially. Formally considered, they may be divided into two main parts (that is, leaving aside the Introduction and the Conclusion). The first part (i.–vi.) treats of matters for censure which had come to the Apostle's ears, namely (1) the dissensions (i. 10–iv. 21), (2) the case of incest (v. 1-13), (3) litigation in heathen courts (vi. 1–11), (4) fornication (vi. 12-20). The second part (vii.–xvi.) treats of matters in which the Apostle had been consulted in a letter, or of which he had learned from the bearers of the letter, namely, (1) concerning marriage (vii. 1-24), (2) concerning virgins (vii. 25-40), (3) concerning food offered to idols (viii. 1–xi. 1), (4) the veiling of women at public worship (xi. 2-16), (5) the celebration of the Lord's Supper (xi. 17-34), (6) concerning spiritual gifts (xii. 1–xiv. 40), (7) the resurrection of the dead (xv. 1-58), (8) concerning the collection (xvi. 1-11), (9) concerning Apollos (xvi. 12). In this plan of the Epistle i. 1-9 would form the Introduction and xvi. 13-24 the Conclusion. Materially regarded, the contents may be divided into four main parts, and this division cuts across the formal division. The first part treats of the dissensions (i. 10–iv. 21), the second part of moral questions (v. 1–xi. 1), the third part of matters connected with public worship (xi. 2–xiv. 40), and the fourth part of the resurrection of the dead (xv.). In this plan i. 1-9 would, as before, form the Introduction, and xvi. 1-24 would be the Conclusion.

8. *Summary.*—In summarizing the contents of the Epistle it will be convenient to follow the fourfold division, that is, the material division above-named.

A. After the introductory salutation and thanksgiving (i. 1-9), St Paul turns first to the most urgent matter for censure, namely, the party spirit that had become manifest. In entreating the Corinthians to be united he gives thanks that he had so rarely baptized when among them, thus doing nothing to foster the spirit of faction (i. 10-17). In this connection he recalls how simple his preaching of the Cross had been (i. 17), and is led to contrast God's power and wisdom with the false wisdom of the Jew and the Greek, for whom the simplicity of the Cross is foolishness (i. 18-25). God had revealed His power among them of Corinth; yet how very few of them were wise or powerful or high-born (i. 26-31). While it was not his eloquence or his wisdom that persuaded them (ii. 1-5), none the less it is true wisdom—the wisdom of God revealed by His Spirit—that he and other preachers of the gospel impart (ii. 6-13). This true wisdom only the spiritual man can receive (ii. 14, 15), but they are not spiritual; their jealousies and contentions show them to be only babes as yet in the Christian life (iii. 1-4); and they cannot understand that Apollos and he are not leaders of parties, but instruments of the Divine grace, workers in God's field, upon God's building (iii. 5-9). The work of those who build upon the one possible foundation, which he himself has already laid, will be tested in the Day of Judgment (iii. 10-17). The Apostle then sums up and presses home this teaching concerning the false wisdom and the true, and concerning the right way of estimating Apollos, himself, and other Christian teachers, whose work is only properly subject to the Final Judgment (iii. 18–iv. 5); and he

applies to the Corinthians themselves the lesson here involved, warning them against pride and vain glory—them who are so gifted and rich and wise and fortunate compared with the Apostles (iv. 6-13)! In concluding this section the Apostle changes from irony to tenderness, the tenderness of a father in Christ, who will shortly come to them, meantime sending Timothy, the trusty and well-beloved (iv. 14-21).

B. The Apostle now takes up certain moral questions: (1) First of all he deals with a second matter for blame, namely, the acquiescence of the Corinthian Christians in an incestuous person in their membership; such an offender is a menace to their Christian life (v. 1-8). It was not that they were to shun all fornicators. That would be to go out of the world altogether. They were to shun those who bore the name of Christ and yet were given to fornication and such like (v. 9-13). (2) Then the Apostle passes to a third matter for blame, namely, litigation in heathen courts, asking how Christians could bring themselves to submit their disputes to heathen judges instead of settling them among themselves (vi. 1-8). All such wrong-doing on their part should have been put away by this time (vi. 9-11). (3) The Apostle then passes to a fourth matter for blame, namely, the practice of fornication in general, which is now condemned in itself. It is not to be condoned in the name of Christian liberty, which is not bondage to fleshly lusts; the body is not made for fornication but is a temple of the Spirit (vi. 12-20). (4) Another moral question is that of marriage. While preferring the unmarried state for himself and others, the Apostle thinks that marriage is to be generally commended as natural and safe, and that married persons should render each to the other what is due (vii. 1-7). He advises the unmarried and widows to remain single if they can safely do so (vii. 8, 9), the married not to divorce each other (vii. 10, 11), the believer married to a heathen wife or husband not to seek divorce (vii. 12-14) but to acquiesce in divorce if it is demanded (vii. 15, 16). The general principle involved applies also to circumcision and slavery, but a chance of freedom should be utilized (vii. 17-24). The Apostle then reiterates what he has said, in the light of the shortness of the time (vii. 25-35), making a special reference to the case of virgins or unmarried daughters and widows (vii. 36-40). (5) A fifth moral question is concerning food offered to idols. There is no harm in such food seeing that the idol represents nothing existent. This knowledge, however, is not shared by all, and we should be ready to abstain from food offered to idols in deference to the scruples of the ignorant and superstitious (viii. 1-13). Surely that is not too much to ask. He himself forbears to claim the right of an apostle to be maintained by the churches (ix. 1-18), becoming indeed all things to all men for Christ's sake (ix. 19-23); and besides, we must subject ourselves to discipline and control if we are to gain the heavenly prize (ix. 24-27). Their fathers through their self-confidence in the wilderness lost the promised prize (x. 1-5), and they in their turn should trust not in themselves but in God (x. 6-13). They must therefore avoid idolatry, and it is idolatry to participate in idol-feasts, just as to participate in the Lord's Supper is to share in the body and blood of Christ and to participate in the Jewish sacrificial feasts is to share in the altar (x. 14-22). None the less we may freely eat at the house of a heathen all meat sold in the market, unless warned by some fellow-guest that the piece of meat before us has been offered to idols. Let us be guided by what is expedient, not by what is permitted, in all things seeking God's glory (x. 23–xi. 1).

C. Now come certain matters for correction related to public worship: (1) First there is the question of women's dress. For a woman to appear in church unveiled is to disavow her natural subjection to man and is therefore a cause of scandal. None the less man and woman bear equal parts in God's sight. But it is natural for a woman to wear long hair and both ordinance and nature prescribe the covering (xi. 2-16). (2) Then there are the party divisions (xi. 17-19), and, more particularly, there is the selfishness displayed by the rich at the celebrations of the Lord's Supper (xi. 20-22), which the Lord Jesus instituted (xi. 23-25) as a proclamation of His death until His return (xi. 26). Such profanation brings the judgment of condemnation (xi. 27-32). Before commencing the common meal they should wait till all are assembled (xi. 32-34). (3) Then there is the matter of spiritual gifts (or spiritual persons), which is another source of rivalry and confusion. After showing how Divine gifts may be tested (xii. 1-3) the Apostle

goes on to say that the spiritual gifts, however many and varied, are essentially one, as being dependent on the one Spirit, and are for the advantage of all (xii. 4-11), just as the members of the human body are united in mutual helpfulness (xii. 12-30). If any of the Corinthians would seek greater gifts then let them be rooted and grounded in the most excellent gift of love, which is the one gift that counts (xii. 31–xiii. 3), including as it does all that is good and true (xiii. 4-7), and the only gift that will last on like faith and hope, though it is the greatest of them all (xiii. 8-13). Wherefore in seeking spiritual gifts they should do so from the motive of love, preferring the gift of prophecy, which may help all, to the gift of tongues, which are difficult of interpretation, so difficult indeed that tongues should be exercised in private, whereas all who are inspired to prophecy may prophesy in public in their turn (xiv. 1-33), except that women must keep silence (xiv. 34-36). In short, seek the gift of prophecy and forbid not the exercise of tongues, but let all things be done in seemliness and order (xiv. 37-40).

D. The Apostle turns now from moral and liturgical questions to a doctrinal one, namely, the resurrection of the dead, which certain at Corinth denied (xv. 12). (1) The resurrection of Christ, which was predicted in Scripture and to which many including himself are witnesses, is a fundamental and essential article of apostolic preaching (xv. 1-11). But if Christ is risen, the denial of the resurrection of the dead makes apostolic preaching a lie and Christian faith and hope a delusion (xv. 12-19). (2) But Christ has been actually raised and is become the first sheaf of the final harvest, after which He will become subject to the Father (xv. 20-28). Otherwise, why are people baptized for the sake of the dead? And why do so many of them endure peril and persecution (xv. 29-34)? (3) As for the nature of the resurrection body, there is a difference between the body that dies and the body that is raised, just as between the seed that is sown and the seed that is raised, or between the First Adam and the Second Adam (xv. 35-49). It is true that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, but the material body will be changed at the last trump, and death swallowed up in victory. Let them therefore be steadfast (xv. 50-58). In concluding the Epistle St Paul refers to the collection for the Church in Jerusalem and to certain personal matters, sending also exhortations, commendations, salutations, imprecations, and blessings (xvi. 1-24).

WILLIAM FULTON

The Christ of St Paul

1 Cor. i. 1.—'Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ.'

ST PAUL is our earliest and most important witness for Jesus Christ, so it is all-important to know what his presentation and understanding of the Lord were. He became a Christian only, at the outside, some four or five years after the crucifixion of Jesus. His letters are the earliest Christian documents extant, and the more important of them are to be dated within twenty-five years of the death of Jesus. They take us back to that time when Christian teaching was being first formulated, and when the Christian Church was being first built up. They are in no sense studied historical presentations of Jesus Christ; they are, rather, fugitive pieces that have come white-hot out of the heart of the writer and are addressed to certain special needs and circumstances in the Christian Church. It is necessary to take some pains in trying to understand them; and they are to be understood, not by being treated as repositories of proof texts, but by being read as we would read any other books, and read with the background of the time and circumstances in which they were written always before our minds. When this is done it is possible to discover what wonderful letters these are. They burn with passion and throb with life; there is felt through them the beating of a great heart; they are direct, forceful, and convincing; they witness in every line of them to the hold which the writer had on Jesus Christ, and to the hold which Jesus Christ had on him.

There are some scholars who tell us that they can discover in the writings of the Apostle Paul that he had no sort of interest in the historical Jesus. They say he is dealing with the Christ of Idea and Ideal all the while; that, as St Paul presents Him, Christ is the product of his own heated imagination, and very far removed

from the Jesus of history. The answer to this is simple. St Paul has no need to dwell upon the details of the life of Jesus or His teaching. He was writing for people whose minds had long been familiar with these things, and who did not need that he should repeat them on every occasion. What he had to do was to take this story of Jesus Christ as it had been manifested to him, and to tell it to others in such a way that out of the tale they could come to understand that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of man, and that of this great fact he, Paul, was a witness.

Now, what was the relation of this man to Jesus Christ? He had been at first a persecutor of Christianity. He was a Jew; and to him the mere thought of a crucified Messiah was blasphemy. It was a degradation to his holy religion, and being, as he was, a man very earnest about religious things, he thought that he was doing God service in harrying and persecuting these Christians to the utmost. The history of religion supplies abundant evidence that it is often accounted the most right and glorious thing to smite the enemies of God and show them no mercy: and that was St Paul's view.

It was when he was engaged on this work—journeying from Jerusalem to Damascus concerning this persecution of the Christians—that suddenly there came a great light from heaven, and he heard a voice saying: 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.' Trembling and amazed, he asked, 'Who art thou, Lord'? And the answer came, 'I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.' About this story, and the experience it involved, a whole literature has grown up. It is hardly necessary to try to explain it. None of the explanations given makes the slightest difference to the fact that from that time forward Paul was a changed man. He sank to the earth bewildered and stunned. He came to himself, groping like a blind man; and for some three years he dwelt apart, pondering on the vision, and seeking to relate it to his thought and life. It had come to him like a bolt from the blue, a voice from the very presence of God. And the meaning of it was an unmistakable conviction that in this Jesus whom he was persecuting, whom he hated with a bitter hate, there was the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

'What light,' asks Professor A. E. Taylor,[1] 'is thrown on St Paul's "day of Damascus" when we are told that the persecutor Saul must already have had a "latent disposition" to favour Christianity which was not present in his fellow-inquisitors? Is this more than a mere re-statement of the fact to be explained, that Saul was converted while his associates in the expedition were not? If we take it as a real explanation and then go on to construct a spiritual biography in which Saul is credited with an actual history of mental conflict and represented as instigated to his acts of violence by a desire to stifle his own growing suspicion that the "Galilean" might, after all, be in the right of it, what guarantee have we that this interpretation is more than a romance of our own making?'

What's that, which, ere I spake was gone!
So joyful and intense a spark
That, whilst o'erhead the wonder shone,
The day, before but dull, grew dark?
I do not know; but this I know,
That, had the splendour lived a year,
The truth that I some heavenly show
Did see, could not be now more clear.
This know I too: might mortal breath
Express the passion then inspired,
Evil would die a natural death,
And nothing transient be desired:
And error from the soul would pass,
And leave the senses pure and strong
As sunbeams. But the best, alas,
Has neither memory nor tongue.[2]

St Paul was a man who did not do things by halves, and when he made this discovery he shaped his life accordingly. From that very moment he was Christ's man; he gave himself utterly and absolutely to this new Leader and Master of his soul. It was then only a very little time since Jesus Christ had been upon the earth. Paul consorted with some of the men who had known Him, he talked with them, and sat at their feet. He gathered from them His gospel, and came to understand from what they said something of the teaching and message of Jesus Christ. He was able to formulate in his own mind what the life of Jesus Christ meant for himself and for the world. He came

[1] In *Contemporary British Philosophy.*
[2] Coventry Patmore.

forth from his days of retirement a man charged and possessed by Jesus Christ, and he went out into the world as the apostle of Christ, to preach His gospel to all men. This gospel had three notes: (1) Jesus as Son of God, (2) Jesus as the Saviour of the world, and (3) Jesus as Lord of Life.

1. *Jesus as the Son of God.*—A close study of St Paul's letters concerning Jesus Christ leads to the conclusion that whilst he holds, or seems to hold, that the Lord Jesus Christ was in some way inferior and subordinate to God the Father, he yet very frequently puts Him, as it were, side by side with God, and reads God in terms of His revelation. To him God is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. To him Jesus Christ has the religious value of God; to him Jesus Christ is the centre, sum, and beginning of the Christian religion.

We have to ask, How did it become possible and agreeable for a man like this Apostle, who had not known Jesus in the flesh, to go about and preach Him, and in the strength of his preaching to suffer and to persuade others to suffer in His name? The only answer to the question is to be found in the fact that to St Paul Jesus was the Christ, the everlasting Son of the Father, the Lord and Master of men, who has the right to demand and receive the homage of every human soul. It is not altogether easy to indicate the ground and reason for this in the Apostle's consciousness. It may be that we must find it in the evidence he had received from the other Apostles as to the sinless and beautiful life of Jesus Christ, or in the experience which he had himself obtained concerning Jesus Christ in the meditation of his own heart. But whether we find it here or there matters little for the result, which is that to this Apostle Jesus Christ was the equivalent of God, and that he found in Jesus Christ, and in Him alone, the way to God, the way to life and peace.

2. *Jesus as the Saviour of the World.*—His saving work centred in, and was made possible by, His cross. To St Paul the cross of Jesus Christ is the great central pillar of his faith. In his attempts to describe the meaning of the death of Jesus on the cross St Paul almost exhausts the possibilities of human speech. It is a sacrifice, a propitiation, a means of reconciliation, an atonement. In every possible way, and by every possible kind of illustration, he tries to bring home to the hearts of men this thought, that in Jesus Christ's death, in the love that that death involved and manifested, there is a ground and reason for man's hope and peace, for his forgiveness, his justification, his salvation, his sanctification.

Now, here we must go direct to the heart of the Apostle's own experience. Apart from this no intelligible or satisfactory explanation either of the fact or of the doctrine based upon it is possible. Doctrine is, in this case, but the putting into words the influence that the fact of the death of Christ had in the man's own experience. Let us return to that experience for a moment. It must be remembered that St Paul was a consistent Jew, a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He believed in the Law of God, and he believed that the one thing man had to do in this world was to keep that Law. For himself, he had tried to keep it from his youth up. He had struggled to do his duty; but, try as he would, he had failed. He had sinned miserably, and he saw before him a long vista of days in which he was to strive helplessly and hopelessly to do God's will, but without success.

¶ 'I have vowed above a thousand times,' said Staupitz, Luther's friend, 'that I would become better, but I have never performed that which I vowed. Hereafter I will make no such vow, for I have now learned from experience that I am not able to perform it.'

Then there came the revelation. It meant for St Paul that what he could not do for himself God through Christ Jesus had done for him, for all men, and for all time; and that what he had to do now was not to seek to do the will of God, and spend himself in vain in the struggle, but rather to accept the gift of forgiveness at God's hands as a gracious act upon His part and as won for him by the work of Jesus Christ. And it was that thought which brought peace to this restless soul.

3. *Jesus as the Lord of Life.*—In the writings of this Apostle the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and His present life and power resulting from it, play a very large part. To him the resurrection was vital. It meant everything. It meant all the difference between a dead and a living Christ. It meant all the difference between hope and despair. To St Paul Jesus Christ

was not a sacred and beautiful memory, He was a living power; and in Him the Apostle himself lived. His life in Christ was a positive and real thing. To him to live was Christ, and his mystical union with Christ had a real ethical value. He was trying constantly to do the will of Christ; he was preaching every hour the gospel of Christ. He saw something of the saving power of Jesus Christ in his own life, and knew what Christ meant to him. He realized that he was lifted out of the gloomy dungeon of the Law into the glorious liberty of a child of God. He knew that for him the change was as real as it was inexpressible. It meant life to him, a new life, a larger and fuller life than he had known before; and because he knew that, he was able to tell men and women of the Christ who had brought this to him, and in whom he found it realized. He did not look back to a dead Christ; he looked up and around him as to one who was alive for evermore, and who was his elder brother and his daily companion and friend. He found in this Christ the Head of the Christian Church, of the whole Christian community; and he bade men and women everywhere look up to Him as their Lord and Master, their Saviour and their King, and, by their relation to Him, find life and peace.

Our Vocation

1 Cor. i. 2.—'Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.'

That was St Paul's ordinary mode of addressing a Church and the people who composed the membership of a Church. He speaks of them as the sanctified, and calls them saints. In the Gospels the followers of the Lord Jesus are called disciples. In the Acts of the Apostles they are mostly called believers, but in the Epistles the first of these words is entirely dropped out, and the second is almost superseded by 'the faithful,' or, more frequently, 'the saints.' To-day the word saint has a distinct flavour of antiquity, and brings to our mind things that have gone entirely out of fashion. We think of those who suffered martyrdom in the days when the gibbet and the scaffold and the burning faggots were the penalty of faith; or we think of the men and women, with lean ascetic faces, who retired from the world and spent their lives in fasting, self-mortification, and prayers; or we think of some quite exceptional person living now who has very little in common with the rest of us, some man or woman of elevated, unspotted life who walks far apart from us in a world of prayer and meditation. That is our conception of a saint, and we should never dream of taking the word to ourselves. We imagine that the saint must be far above the ordinary affairs of life. And yet we have only to look at our text to see that this is an artificial conception and not at all Scriptural. We find no hint of the Romish and ecclesiastical and out-of-the-world saint in this Epistle. The people who composed this Church at Corinth were much in the world, busy in its workshops and various spheres of service, buying and selling in the market, men and women of like passions with ourselves. And yet sanctified in Christ Jesus and called saints.

¶ There is an insect known to zoology as the water spider, that lives at the bottom of muddy pools, and has the peculiar power of ascending to the surface of the pool and there surrounding itself with a tiny crystal globule of air. Thus enveloped it descends to the sludge and ooze at the bottom of the pool and remains there until the air is exhausted, when it rises again to the surface and the process is repeated. That is Nature's parable. It is possible to be a saint in 'Corinth.'[1]

There are two main words in this text—*called* and *saints*. These words raise two questions, and it is best to begin with the second. So we have: What is meant by saints? And what is meant when saints are regarded as such in virtue of a call?

1. *Saints.*—They are people belonging to God. The idea underlying the word is that of separateness, of devotedness to some holy purpose. The word would be used with exactness concerning, for example, a gift which had been set apart as a sacrifice. It signifies, that is to say, not something which is already holy or which is holy in itself, but rather something which has now been set aside, consecrated to some holy use. The New Testament would call a thing *hieros* which was in itself spotlessly clean; but *hagios*, the word translated 'saint,'

[1] J. S. Holden.

anything which, whatever may be its own nature, or whatever may have been its past history and previous use, is now offered to God.

In the course of Christian history there have been two great and typical attempts made to determine the kind of separateness which belongs or ought to belong to the saints as the people of God. The first is the Roman Catholic, which may be said to proscribe the world as a whole, to excommunicate Nature and society, and to renounce the common relations and duties of life. Only a person who goes out of the world altogether and who lives in a hermitage or a monastery, renouncing property, family ties, and individual will, is a 'religious,' and may become a 'saint.' This conception was certainly not the one in Paul's mind. He did not think of some Christians as called to be saints, and of others—of the great mass, indeed—as condemned to be content with some lower life; to him a saint and a Christian are the same thing.

The other type of separateness which has been illustrated in history may without injustice be called the evangelical one, if we use that term in its conventional rather than its New Testament meaning. It proscribes the world, not as a whole, like the Roman Catholic view, but piecemeal. When the great evangelical revival of the eighteenth century took place, it was accompanied with a conception of this kind. For those who took this calling seriously, there could be no dancing, no novel reading, no card parties, no theatre going: these things were all of the world, not of God, and those who took part in them could claim to be God's people no longer. Doubtless this judgment, for those who first framed it and made it the rule of their own life, was sound enough. Nevertheless, to try to fulfil the Christian calling simply by observing such abstentions as the circumstances of one particular age or one particular revival have pronounced obligatory is futile. Experience condemns it as unequivocally as it does the Roman Catholic plan.

¶ 'Beware,' said a devout Frenchman, 'of a religion which substitutes itself for everything—that makes monks. Seek a religion which penetrates everything—that makes Christians.'

But what other way, it may be asked, is left? The answer is that the New Testament way is left. The separateness from the world which it implies is not the means to saintliness, but the manifestation or result of it. Saintliness is not produced by separation. It is expressed in separateness, but it is produced by the love of God.

(1) It is *a life of inner unity and consistency*—the life of the man who can say at last, 'This one thing I do.' Much of the sin and misery of common life is literally dissipation. We do this and do that, are busy here and there, but our energies do not converge upon anything; we do not know what we are doing. We are like Matthew Arnold's restless travellers, who

> See all sights from pole to pole,
> And glance, and nod, and bustle by,
> And never once possess their soul
> Before they die.

This disappears from the life of those in whom the redeeming love of God absorbs all good motives into itself and dominates everything. And it is a mark of the true saint to have the assurance that nothing in his life is vain, and that God from whom it all comes is using it all.

(2) It is *a life* which is *marked by moral originality*. The saint has been redeemed from all that is conventional in conduct. To live under a rule is the very antithesis of the saint's calling. Every act of his is an act of creation in the moral world. No law prescribed it, yet once it is done we see it is supremely right. The great illustration of this is Jesus Himself, the only person who is spoken of in the New Testament as 'the saint (or holy one) of God.' Nothing strikes us more in Jesus than His incalculableness, the startling newness and freshness of all His words and deeds. He is the only inspiration of the saint's life, and the man who follows Him is he who, in the sense of God's redeeming love, is no longer a slave but a son, and does, in a way which is all his own, the will of the Father?

(3) It is *a life* which is *morally effective*. It tells upon the world as genuine goodness tells. The saint is a person living in the consciousness of the love of God, and everything that is in him, so far as he is a saint, is in correspondence with that love. There must be something redemptive in his goodness, something which appeals to and wins men. There is such a thing as holiness which is inspired not by the

sense of God's love, but by selfishness, and such holiness can always be detected as a sham by this—it has no redeeming power. It does not touch the sinful, and waken in their unhappy hearts a longing to share in it; it does not stretch out helpful hands of which they can take hold. But holiness, the character of those who are God's, is born of the sense of God's love; and it brings the sense of that love in all its redeeming power, to those who behold it.

¶ H. C. G. Moule was, among recent Bishops, one of the great, purely religious forces. To this there contributed highly cultivated mental powers, literary celebrity, evangelical fervour. He was never the cold pundit, but always vivid and intense. Like Liddon he was beloved, but unlike him he was neither fiery nor rigid. Like Bengel he was a scholar and a saint. While his religion was scholarly and intellectual, it was also emotional as all religion ought to be. Jesus in the heart—Jesus showing in the life—religion radiating beyond itself—were the main themes on which he delighted to dwell. The spiritual power which clothed him, softened those who heard him into adoration and trust. Faith rose to a noble simplicity and rare happiness in his atmosphere, and with all his earnestness he was free from the infirmities of the zealot. Some have much of the evil one in them, some much of the angel: Moule had the angel.

> We see him as he moved:
> How modest, kindly, all accomplished wise,
> Not making his high place the lawless perch
> Of wing'd ambition, nor a vantage ground
> For pleasure; but through all the tract of years
> Wearing the white flower of a blameless life.[1]

The greatness of this life may well seem too great, and, indeed, we may hear professedly Christian people saying, 'Of course I don't pretend to be a saint,' which can only mean 'I don't take the Christian religion quite seriously.' Could anything be more profane than to respond in this equivocal way to the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us? But sometimes discouraging thoughts rise—our past which we cannot forget, our present sin which still defeats us, the wisdom of the world which says it is hopeless to aim so high. As against all such discouraging thoughts, let us turn to the final and conclusive encouragement which we have in the other word of the text—'called.'

2. *Called.*—What does it mean to say that we are 'called' to be saints? When we remember that for the Apostle it is always God who calls, we may surely say such things as these. Our calling *cannot be a matter of indifference.* There are things in the world which are of little consequence; it makes no difference what our relation to them is. But a Divine calling cannot be one of such things. Remember, it is God who calls. He calls through the gospel; He calls through the life and words, through the death and resurrection of His Son; He calls through the gift and ministry of His Spirit; and He never calls us to anything else or anything less than this—to be saints. It cannot be a matter of no consequence how we respond to such a call. *Nor is it a matter of presumption* on our part. It is not a life for which we volunteer, or which we have to carry through on our own resources; it is a life to which we have a Divine summons, and that summons is our justification. It would be presumption if we looked at it as an adventure, but when God calls us the presumption is to hold back. Most important of all: to have a calling to be saints is to be assured that the issue of the life to which we are pledged *is not a matter of uncertainty.* We can face it not only with humility but with hope. In his history of the early Church, Dr Rainy sets this down as the great change which came upon the world with the appearance of Christianity: the life of goodness became an assured career. Before the gospel came, despair had fallen upon the ancient world; society had abandoned the very idea and hope of goodness; 'deep weariness and sated lust made human life a hell.' But suddenly a change came. Men appeared in that lost world with an assured and triumphant hope, to be holy as God is holy; and it spread from heart to heart till in the Christian Church a new people of God became visible upon earth, a society which with all its imperfections was a communion of saints. What was it that made the change? It was the sense of a Divine call that had come to men. And how had it come?

[1] J. Baird, *The Spiritual Unfolding of Bishop H. C. G. Moule, D.D.*, 123.

It came through the revelation of the love of God. If we are ignorant of this, then any life like that which the saints set before them must appear fantastic and unreal. It is only because we have this love of God to lean upon that we dare aspire so high. It is only as we lean upon it that our calling to be God's becomes credible, practicable, real. Underneath all our sinfulness and weakness, underneath our past, our present, and our future, lies a finished work of Christ, a great deep of love on which our wrecked and stranded lives can be floated into the assurance of hope, and filled with all the fullness of God.

Full Surrender

1 Cor. i. 2.—'Called to be saints.'

THE word 'saint,' with its requirement of consecration, has passed out of common use. Yet saintliness is the note of the Christian life. The common reproach uttered by the world is that Christian men are not 'saints.' Even with its undiscerning eyes the world understands what Christ was, and what His followers should be.

Now to become a saint is simply to consecrate oneself by a dedication which implies a separation from all that is evil, and the keeping of a covenant with God. This consecration is the full surrender of all we are and all we have. Saintliness may be full of mystery, even to the end. But consecration is the pathway along which we travel to it. The full surrender is the entering into that path, and the features of its experience are simple and definite.

1. In the first place, it is *the consecration of life.*—Saintliness is not the entering of any order, or the adoption of any distinctive garb, or mode of speech. It is not the perquisite and privilege of a certain temperament, or the peculiar effect of especial circumstances. In the New Testament saintliness is the expectation from all who have named Christ's name. Saintliness was the token and proof of their redemption. It was the state and the atmosphere of their souls. It was the quality of their character. The faith in Christ owes an incalculable debt to John Wesley for the fervour and the sanity of his evangelism. But it is open to say that the indebtedness is equally great for his constant and convincing insistence that a holiness which attains to a flawless love towards God and man, with a consequent faultlessness of bearing, is the imperative and the possibility of every believer.

¶ Mrs Isabella Bishop, in one of her books of travel,[1] tells the story of a journey which she made through one of the northern districts of Persia. Her eyes were affronted by the undisguised heathenism of the village communities. Her spirit was saddened by the unrestrained indulgence of coarse passions, whose curse lay, like gross darkness, upon the people. She was given kindly shelter and gracious hospitality by the members of a little American Mission settlement. To pass out of that Pagan environment into this home of Christian ideals, to be greeted with a welcome of unselfish kindness, to witness the lives of those who were living for others, and to spend some days in the atmosphere of its peace, was to realize the meaning of consecration of life, and to find the word 'saints' embalmed in her memory. 'In purity of life,' she says, 'in ceaseless benevolence, in truthfulness and loyalty to engagements, in kind and just dealing, in temperance and self-denial, in the dissemination in the city and neighbourhood of a higher teaching on the duties of common life—in short, in lives spent in cheerful obedience to God, and in the service of man, they showed the love which looks kindly on all things.'

Sainthood is the full surrender of the life to the will and purpose of God. It is not the high state of a few rare spirits who can reach a more delicate bloom. It is life after the pattern of Christ.

No monkish garb he wears, no beads he tells,
  Nor is immured in walls remote from strife;
But from his heart deep mercy ever wells;
  He looks humanely forth on human life.

He looks not holy; simple is his belief;
  His creed for mystic visions do not scan;
His face shows lines cut there by others' grief;
  And in his eyes is love of brother-man.

Not self nor self-salvation is his care;
  He yearns to make the world a summer clime
To live in; and his mission everywhere
  Is strangely like to Christ's in olden time.

[1] *Travels in Persia and Kurdistan*, ii. 164.

No medieval mystery, no crowned
Dim figure, halo-ringed, uncanny bright;
A modern saint! A man who treads earth's ground
And ministers to men with all his might.[1]

2. In the second place, it is *a consecration in service.*—Consecration in life springs forward inevitably and passionately to consecration in service. Paul marks the secret of the excelling generosity of the churches of Macedonia in that they 'first gave their own selves unto the Lord.' He touches the inner core of the truth when he appeals to those who have known the mercies of God, to 'present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.'

The finest interpretation of this surrender is to be found in one of the closing episodes of David's life. His dream of building a house of God was not to be realized. In the meekness of a surrendered spirit he resolved to prepare materials. David knew how prone men are to be eager to be numbered among God's people, to claim the privileges of their fellowship, and yet to fail in consecration and in service. He gathered the multitude together and he made his appeal, 'Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?' The Hebrew word for 'consecrate' is full of suggestion. It means—to fill the hand. 'Who then is willing to fill his hand this day unto the Lord?' To fill the hand is to take the most notable instrument of service and to occupy and engross it for God. The hand which is filled for God can touch nothing unclean, can be filled with nothing else, can be busy only in some service for God. The figure is at once the simplest and the most complete picture of an entire consecration in service.

The most common reply of the man unwilling to pass on to this consecration and to take up some office or bear some burden, is, 'My hands are full.' Men plead that the management of their business, the long hours of strenuous labour, the fulfilment of the daily round, or the calls made upon them by the interests of life and society, fill their hands full. But the question is, In what spirit are the hands filled? Are they filled 'unto the Lord'? A man's hands may be too full. They may be filled only unto his own worldly aggrandizement. They may be filled with the cultivation of his aptitudes, and the gratification of his tastes. In such cases, we have men and women who have not made the full surrender, and are not among the consecrated.

¶ As a simple and steadfast fact it is the busy men and women who serve Christ. When Dr Moulton, one of the most distinguished scholars of his time, was Headmaster of the Leys School at Cambridge, he found that his responsible duties often occupied sixteen hours of the day. He saw no way of lessening his toil, but he found its routine exhausting to his spirit. It was borne in upon him that, apart from the consecration required for his daily work, he might fill his hand with some special service for God. He took upon himself the conduct of the early morning worship with the boys of the school. Year by year this toilworn man gave the half hour he could so hardly spare to this morning exercise. He set it on record that that hour, consecrated in a special surrender, redeemed a dusty life from its temptation to formality, and led him, day by day, into the secret of the Lord.

3. In the third place, it is *a consecration to Christ.*—It is a ruling canon of Christian ethics that the moral value of every action is to be estimated by its motive. Many men order their lives under the imperative of motives which we need not too hardly condemn. Truth is always truth and purity is always purity, whatever may be the compelling power behind it. Honourable service is often rendered for reasons which all men would commend. The love of country, the advancement of a great cause, the reform of an evil law are worthy ends, and they constitute, when realized, commendable motives. But the Christian life has its own motives. These are higher in moral elevation and more absolute in their imperative than those regarded by the most austere of moralists. These motives rise in an ascending scale of authority and power. A progressive Christian life will obey in succession every one of them. At the beginning of a believer's experience the ruling impulse is often his own spiritual well-being. But as life progresses, and the conscience becomes more enlightened and the desires become more keen, the motives become more unselfish and more tender. We are, then, called upon to live out the Christian

[1] Richard Burton.

life 'for righteousness sake.' Again, we are called to a nobler self-denial 'for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.' But for the believer the highest motive is always—'for Christ's sake.' There are times in life when all motives fail but the highest. The believer has only to recall Christ's cross and its redeeming grace to find himself flooded with the power of a motive which nothing can resist.[1]

¶ When the bishop laid his hands on my head, if my evil heart doth not deceive me, I offered up my whole spirit, soul, and body to the service of God's sanctuary. I can call heaven and earth to witness that, when the bishop laid his hand upon me, I gave myself to be a martyr for Him, who hung upon the cross for me. . . . I have thrown myself without reserve, into His almighty hands.[2]

¶ It was on Advent Sunday, 1873, that I first saw clearly the blessedness of a true consecration. I saw it as a flash of electric light, and what you see once you can never unsee. There must be full surrender before there can be full blessedness. God admits you by the one into the other. He himself showed me this most clearly. You know how singularly I have been withheld from attending Conventions and Conferences; man's teaching has consequently but little to do with it. First I was shown that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin: and then it was made plain to me that He who had thus cleansed me had power to keep me clean. So I utterly yielded myself to Him, and utterly trusted Him to keep me.[3]

The Secret of Saintship

1 Cor. i. 2.—'Saints.'

'TELL me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth,' asks the world of the Christian saint. Psychologists have spent much time and labour in dissecting the many-petalled rose of Christian sanctity, that they might discover its golden heart. They have told us much that is true and useful about its manner of attachment to the common soil of earth and its external relations to other plants; but they cannot give us the secret of its life, the source of its unique charm, the name of the hidden magician who takes colour and perfume, softness and dewy bloom, and makes of them a rose.

The true answer lies behind a door to which the mere psychologist has no key. It wells up from the deep heart of the redeemed Church of God. The secret of the saint's strength, says the voice of Christian experience, is his love to Christ—that intense personal devotion to a Divine Redeemer and Friend which is his very life. Of all motives that sway the soul, a personal love to Christ is the strongest and most enduring. Other religious motives easily lose their force and often prove inadequate in face of the enemy. But those who adhere to our Lord with the simplicity and energy of love endure to the end.

Saints of all ages, illustrious and obscure, have conspired to bind a diadem of love about the brow of their King; none so poor and straitened but has added some soft gem or delicate link of gold to that crown. From the dawn of the Church to our own day, there has been no break in the finely-wrought links. In its contriving, the centuries meet together, and the contemplative and the active are seen to be one. Angela de Foligno ponders the things of God in her quiet cell, 'till her eyes shine like candles, and her face is as a rose'; while Wilfred Grenfell responds to the Divine call by a life of ceaseless activity; but both are borne on the fiery wings of the same love. Thomas à Kempis spends his cloistered days in writing what is not so much an 'Imitation of Christ' as a golden book of the love of Jesus; and the soldier-saint, General Gordon, kept that book by him through all his strenuous days, sending for a new copy during his last dread ordeal at Khartoum. And countless unknown saints, distinguished by no special gift or achievement, follow Brother Lawrence and find the secret spring of strength and holiness in doing their daily work for the pure love of God.

What is true of individuals is true of religious movements. When John Wesley began his mission, the figure of the Living Christ had grown dim and obscure to the masses of the people. Even Christians tended to conceive of Him in an abstract, theoretical, depersonalized fashion. But Wesley showed to the poor and outcast a living Saviour, with eyes of pity, hands of healing and compassion, and a heart

[1] W. M. Clow, *The Evangel of the Strait Gate*, 176.
[2] L. Tyerman, *The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield*, i. 48.
[3] Frances Ridley Havergal.

big with love and pierced with sorrow for men. His brother Charles crystallized the whole Evangelical Revival in one immortal phrase: 'Jesus, Lover of my soul.' Only the vision of One who is the great Lover of mankind could have changed the face of England. To-day we again tend to conceive of Christ as a diffused spiritual and social influence, rather than as a Divine Person loving to the uttermost and craving our love, and once more we are poor in lives of conspicuous sanctity. For it is love that makes the saint.

As in the world the term 'love' has been profaned, so among Christians love to Christ has often been so conventionalized and sentimentalized that strong and earnest souls have been tempted to hold it in suspicion as at best a tender emotion, suited to the very young and the weak, but not to be compared to the ideals, convictions, and principles which govern the lives of strong men. For such a view we whose glory it is to live by the love of Christ are largely responsible. Our love has often been little more than a heart-warming emotion. We have grasped at its comfort, when we should have thrilled at its heroic demands. It would be well indeed if every Christ-loving soul would occasionally read and deeply ponder that ardent and exalted, yet strangely sobering, chapter in *The Imitation of Christ*, in which the nature of true love is set forth. Following immediately upon a burst of lyric rapture in which the soul soars on wings of flame to meet its Beloved, we find this shrewd and bracing characterization: 'Love is . . . brave, patient, prudent, long-suffering, manly . . . circumspect, humble, upright, not yielding to softness or to lightness, nor attending to vain things. It is sober, chaste, firm, quiet, and guarded in all the senses.' Does this seem to us as so much icy water upon the glowing coal of the altar? If so, we have not gone far in the way of love.

¶ We may say of this love, as Emerson says of the noblest love of human hearts:

> It was never for the mean:
> It requireth courage stout,
> Souls above doubt,
> Valour unbending;
> Such 'twill reward:—
> They shall return
> More than they were
> And ever ascending.

¶ That this grand and passionate nature should be turned into a loving, working, quiet power; that through the years he did not yield to dismay or bitterness; was not tempted by base compliances; was not elated by passing victories; that, having done all, he stood—such was the triumph of St Paul. It is the triumph of all saints. We glory most not in their brilliant and victorious hours, but in their steadfast perseverance through light and shadow to the end.[1]

The true love of the Lord—the love that is a lifelong response to Him who first loved us—is as warm and joyous as the sun, and as strong and searching. When in 1812 Mr Spencer Perceval, then Prime Minister, was shot by a Liverpool broker, his wife took all her family to see his dead body, and making them kneel down with her, she prayed for the forgiveness of the murderer. *That* is the love of Christ—not an emotion, but a force sharp as a sword and searching as fire that subdues natural emotion, transforming it into its own image. And nothing but personal devotion to Christ can produce so supernatural and heroic a temper. There have been great lonely men who reached sublime heights in the disinterested service of an impersonal ideal; but there is no sun in these glacial altitudes, and even the few who can breathe that rarefied air wear a pale, chill aspect, and utterly fail to raise others to their level. Here is one great mark of the lover of the Lord Jesus. The lofty moralist remains alone, but the humblest soul that is irradiated by Divine love attracts and wins its fellows.

1. The love of Christ is the great secret of growth in *spiritual knowledge*. He is known by love. There is a knowledge without love, and one can think of no doom more appalling than to know Him, as did the Galilean demons, and not to love Him. Sometimes when we yield to a loveless curiosity concerning Divine things, and our heart grows dry and shrivelled over our unholy study of holy doctrine, we come perilously near that doom. Then it is time to lay doctrine aside for a while, and, opening our slow, dull heart to Him, let His love pierce it to renewed penitence and wistful yearning. It is in such penitential hours that the soul makes swift strides in true wisdom and know-

[1] W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Seen and the Unseen*, 94.

ledge, for penitence is love in its clear-eyed, purging power of discerning and judging sin.

2. The love of Christ is the supreme secret of *noble service*. He still stands upon the shore of our life, asking: 'Lovest thou me?' When He stood on the shore for the first time before the fishermen of Galilee, His call was: 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.' His second call cuts far deeper: 'Feed my sheep; feed my lambs.' It was, comparatively speaking, easy for a fisherman to understand the meaning of being a fisher of men. But now he is called to exercise qualities of which no mere fisherman ever had the skill: the shepherd's tenderness, his watchful care and unwearying patience, his perilous search for the one sheep that is lost, his readiness to lay down his life when he sees the wolf coming. What fisherman ever willingly braved danger and death for the sake of even the finest haul? But no one can be a shepherd of men without love. And the world is not a sea full of fishes: it is a wilderness in which souls wander as sheep without a shepherd. From darkest Africa to luxurious Mayfair, it is shepherding that men need; and the shepherd's heart can be had only through union with Christ. There is no Christian life but would perish utterly if the light of love were extinguished within it. Love is the strength and glory of the life of the saints, love the mighty eloquence of their death.

What is the flame of their fire, if so I may catch the flame;
What the strength of their strength, if also I may wax strong?
The flaming fire of their strength is the love of Jesu's Name,
In whom their death is life, their silence utters a song.[1]

The Christian Optimist

1 Cor. i. 4.—'I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God, which is given you by Jesus Christ.'

NEARLY all St Paul's Epistles to the Churches begin on this note of thanksgiving for the reality of the Christian life of those to whom they are addressed. The Epistle to the Galatians—that epistle of reproof and expostulation—is the only one from which it is entirely absent. Romans, Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians—he has a word of thanksgiving for them all, for their faith, their fellowship in the gospel, their 'labour of love and patience of hope.'

And yet St Paul had much to depress him in his work as a preacher. The work of an apostle in the early Church was arduous in the extreme, involving long and wearisome journeys, calling for perseverance and patient and continuous toil. He had to preach, to organize churches, to convert sinners, to exercise discipline, to establish saints. His audiences were often composed of men sunk in the deepest moral degradation, as at Corinth. Sometimes, after they had been recovered, they fell back into the old ways, and thus saddened his soul. He was often hampered, as in Galatia, by certain well-meaning fanatics who declared that, since he had never seen the Lord, he was not a true apostle, and that the gospel he preached was inadequate. Yet onward he went, over land and sea, in perils of robbers, in perils of the deep, in hunger and weariness and pain, but never in despair.

¶ Oh! for more of that man's spirit, his love, his faith, and above all his dauntless intrepidity for Christ. What a hero he was! What a splendid specimen of humanity! I am selfish enough to love him all the more because 'his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible'; and yet no man ever did more for Christ and for Christ's world.[1]

Again, the intellectual atmosphere of the times in which St Paul lived was discouraging. Human systems of thought and morality had been worked out and found wanting, and there was abroad an attitude to life which taught men, with a certain forced cheerfulness, to make the best of things, which declared that all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and that under the blows of fate men must hold on with fortitude and indifference. These ideas had been prevalent in Greek thought for some time—it was under their influence that, earlier, the Book of Ecclesiastes with its weary scepticism had been written—and they continued into the time of Christ and His Apostles. St Paul must often have listened to this melancholy account

[1] E. Herman, *The Touch of God*, 24.

[1] Frances Balfour, *Life and Letters of the Rev. James MacGregor, D.D.*, 120.

of human affairs, but if at times he was bowed down beneath it, he quickly recovered; if from time to time he was perplexed, he was never in despair.

There is, perhaps, no feature in St Paul's character which calls more loudly for imitation to-day than precisely this unfailing courage, this unconquerable hope for himself and for the Church.

Doubtless there are influences in our own day which would, were it not for the grace of God, quickly drive us to despair. And in some cases they are strangely similar to the influences that affected St Paul. For instance, in the thought of our day there is a strong undercurrent of pessimism and gloom, of which we cannot but be aware. There is a weary feeling in many minds that life's problems are insoluble, and that the best plan is to have as good a time as possible right to the end. Moreover, there are teachers who declare that this is a blighted world, that pessimism is the true creed, that despair is inevitable. The learned may find this in the writings of Hartmann or Schopenhauer; the plain man may read it in the almost faultless English of Thomas Hardy's later novels. There are those who are teaching that men are what heredity and circumstances make them, that moral responsibility does not exist. This is the dreary doctrine which in crude but vigorous writings is offered for the acceptance of the untutored public mind. At once every healthy nature revolts from this despairing view of life, yet some in practice, if not in theory, accept it. On the one side it leads to depression and gloom, on the other to an excess of frivolity; but in both cases the cause is the same—despair about the things that really matter, and doubt concerning those mighty hopes that make us men.

¶ Mark Rutherford is never too optimistic in his outlook on life; but he says that while trouble and suffering are obvious, 'equally obvious are an evening in June, the delight of men and women in one another, in music, and in the exercise of thought. There can surely be no question that the sum of satisfaction is increasing, not merely in the gross but for each human being, as the earth from which we sprang is being worked out of the race, and a higher type is being developed.' [1]

[1] *Deliverance*, 85.

It is certainly true, also, that the work of the Christian Church has of late been rendered more difficult. The changed intellectual outlook has made many hesitate; the craze for amusement—in itself a reaction from the strain of life—has left no time in many lives for the cultivation of the soul. The Church, bearing testimony to its Lord, seems to make slow progress, and the power of evil is still so strong. Intemperance, in spite of much advance, still claims its thousands of victims; gambling continues to blast many a promising career; gilded vice walks our streets. The power of organized evil nearly drives us to despair as to the ultimate victory of God's cause.

Now, there is nothing which so quickly paralyses a man as despair, and if we desire to be useful and active in the Church and in the world, we must discover the secret of St Paul. Why was it that this man, who was so often perplexed, was never in despair? It was because he believed that God Himself was in the conflict, and that, therefore, final victory was assured.

¶ John Wesley on his death-bed was heard to murmur, 'The best of all is God is with us.' The words are nearly those of St Paul, the faith wholly that of St Paul, and it had borne Wesley through eighty years of labours and wanderings not wholly unlike those of St Paul.

St Paul believed that God had come near to him and to all mankind in the person of Christ, and hence despair was a sin, a denial of Christ, a denial of God. He was indeed perplexed at the slowness of his own growth in grace, and the little headway the Church seemed to be making in the world. But God was for him, and he never doubted that ultimately the world would lie at the feet of Christ.

¶ Of Professor Elmslie, Robertson Nicoll wrote: 'Latterly he could hardly listen without impatience to gloomy forecasts of the future. He believed that all was right with the world, that Christ was busy saving it, and would see of the travail of His soul. Men prone to darker thoughts loved him very much for that.'

The supreme need of the Church to-day is men of this spirit—strong, hopeful, courageous, Christian men. Our faith is weak, our convictions are pale, and we are often afraid to strike at evil. Too often also we are idle, for despair leads to inaction, as Dante saw when

he placed the doubters and deniers next to the slothful and far from the light. We allow ourselves to be occupied with the most gloomy anticipations, we worry about our health, or our business, or our spiritual life, or the cause of Christ in the world, and for all the practical difference it makes there might be no God at all, on earth or in heaven. We must come back to the great fact—the fact of Christ—on which our faith is built. God is in the world, and by His Divine Spirit still moves upon the hearts of men. If God be with us, who can be against us? [1]

Follow the Gleam

1 Cor. i. 9.—'God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.'

THE twentieth century Testament reads the verse thus: 'It was God who called you all alike into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and He will be true to you.' What have these words to say to us?

1. There is in our life the presence of what we may call the higher impulse. There is an external world which appears to outward sense, but we cannot look upon it without feeling that some mysterious world behind it is inviting us to pass through the outer to the inner, beyond the veil of sense to some sacred unseen. That scheme of life which keeps us on the surface of things, or remains on low levels, is always unsatisfactory. It belongs to the true nature of the soul to agitate for a fortune in the Unseen; the human spirit attains self-recognition only on the steps of a sacred stair resting on the visible, reaching into the invisible, on which no step is final, but which itself rises into ever-heightening summits of life.

¶ The motto of my old college is, 'Arduus ad solem,' 'Up to the sun'—that is how it is with the Christian man. The low levels of worldly success do not satisfy him. He has had a vision of the Lord. His ambition, his daily aspiration is that he may be conformed to the image of God's Son. That ambition does not allow him to rest. God's calling in Christ is an 'upward' calling. Life is limitless, boundless, infinite. There is unceasing enrichment, enlargement, expansion. It is a case of 'upward still to purer heights, onward still to scenes more blest.' [1]

It is true that with large numbers of men the impulse to the higher life, the call of the Divine, is undeveloped and unobeyed, and, therefore, paralysed by trivialities. The call from above is drowned by the noises of life. Yet the impulse of ascension does belong to man; he has an instinct for the heights. That is why, when one appears who has given himself up unreservedly to the ideal and calls upon men to follow him, thousands of hearts will move towards him; he appeals through the life they live to the life they know they may live.

¶ In speaking of Francis of Assisi, Sabatier says: 'His person, his example, were themselves a sermon. . . . The greater number of men pass through life with souls asleep. . . . Yet the instinct for love and for the Divine is only slumbering. At the sight of beauty love awakes; at the appeal of holiness the Divine witness within us at once responds; and so we see, streaming from all points of the horizon to gather around those who preach in the name of the inward voice, long processions of souls athirst for the ideal.'

2. It was by virtue of this appeal that Christianity spread in the first centuries of our era. Men were called into the Divine Sonship of Jesus Christ. Now, Paul here is writing to men who had heard that call and been moved by it. What he wants them to remember is that the call was a Divine thing, and that they could absolutely trust it. 'It was God who called you, and He will be true to you.' Let us read this message in a large way. Let us regard all our impulses to higher, better life as Divine things, as the voice of God Himself, and trust them. It is no use denying the fact that though men hear these inward voices they do not always trust them. There are so many difficulties in the path of obedience to them that we are sometimes tempted to regard them as delusions.

Life to-day is suffering greatly from outwardness. Artificiality and superficiality and parade are a large part of it. The more we give way to these, the less will be our power to penetrate to the deeper things of the world about us, and of our hearts within. Nothing is so undivine

[1] J. Colville, *The Christian Optimist*, 143.

[1] J. D. Jones, *The Gospel of the Sovereignty*, 295.

as a human life externalized to the loss of the power of vision, materialized so that the inner glories of things are not seen, and their mysterious calls not heard. It was this that made the poet of Lakeland exclaim :

Great God ! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

If, with the Christian revelation in our hands, and the call of God in Christ in our ears, we still live to get and spend, to eat and drink, better be a pagan, believing any superstition concerning the Unseen, and thereby saved from absolute materialism. The materializing forces of our time are very strong, and we should try by every means in our power to get men to listen to those inward voices, those higher calls—to regard them as Divine, and to trust them.

¶ Tennyson has a fine song on 'Merlin and the Gleam.' It is, in fact, a sort of symbolic sketch of his own life. He wrote it when he was an old man in 1889, looking back to the days of his youth. The gleam no doubt means the higher poetic imagination, the power to see within and behind things, and to sing of spiritual realities. That power awoke in Tennyson very early. When a young boy he could hear a voice speaking in the wind. No sound in his native dells was so dear as that of evening bells in the distance ; that haunted him when a boy as of some vague world whisper, mystic pain or joy ; as a breath from some fair dawn beyond the doors of death, far, far away. It was a clear prophecy that life was not to be bounded by things near or things seen and heard ; it was the rising of a power in him that should break beyond the horizons of one life, and leap even the gates of death. He thinks of all this when he is an old man, and he tells the young who are watching the gray magician with eyes of wonder :

I am Merlin,
And *I* am dying,
I am Merlin
Who follow The Gleam.

The wizard found him sleeping at sunrise, and woke him and taught him the magic of things, the mystic charm of the world—taught him that nothing was just what it appeared, but all had an inner world which he might enter. The gleam floated over valley and mountain, on human face, and on all around.

He saw it shining on silent river and silvery willow, pasture and ploughland ; he saw it in innocent maidens and children, in reaper and gleaner, and in the rough faces of lowly labour. It led him at length to the city and palace of Arthur the King. By following the gleam, by cultivating the idealizing power, by learning to treat the world as spiritual, and through the friendship of Arthur Hallam, Tennyson rose to the conception of Arthur, the ideal character :

And last on the forehead
Of Arthur the blameless
Rested The Gleam.

And when clouds and darkness came after this, as when, after Hallam died, Tennyson felt for a time as if he could sing no more, yet the gleam rose slowly out of the darkness, and drew near to the valley called the shadow of death, and, brightening :

Fell on the shadow,
No longer a shadow,
But clothed with The Gleam.

That poetic imagination, that spiritual perception, which saw behind things, triumphed even over death, and made the valley of the shadow light.

And broader and brighter
The Gleam flying onward,
Wed to the melody,
Sang thro' the world.

So the old man came to the last limit of the world, and could only die rejoicing, as the gleam which lit the early days now hovered all but in heaven. One word to the young before he goes :

O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel,
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow The Gleam.

There is much more here than a message to poets in any special sense. Tennyson's joy was not merely that he had written poetry, but first, that he had taken the world and life on their ideal side, and listened to the upward call. We can all do that, and in a sufficient measure to make life a glorious thing. If some day out of the beauty of Nature there springs some mystic sense of the beauty of God, follow that gleam. If the hour comes when love glows in your heart, and you know it to be worth more than all material things, grasp the torch, and carry it into as many of life's dark rooms as you can. If you once catch sight of the truth that the mainspring of the true life is the spirit which feels its oneness with the world, and that the proper sovereignty of the soul is found in service, realize it as a light which God has kindled for you, and follow it. These are calls of God in your soul. Take them as Divine things; trust them. The God who gives them is faithful; He will be true to you.[1]

3. In all history one of these calls is pre-eminent—that by which God has called us into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ. Those Corinthians had felt a new, strange movement in their own lives; they had turned away from evil to good under this wonderful influence. But all was not easy; it was very uphill work to be a Christian, and there is always enough selfishness about to make genuine Christianity pretty difficult. Sometimes we find the Christian ideal so unlike actual life in ourselves and in the world that we are tempted to ask, Can it be meant that we should pursue it? Are we not mocked by some delusion? Is it not wiser, after all, just to take the world as we find it, and live as like it and as comfortably in it as we can? It is against such a mood that Paul would fortify us. 'God is faithful,' he says. His call is no snare; God does call you, and God will be true to you. And in our deeper moods we know this; whatever the sceptical mood may suggest, the heart knows that in truth and righteousness and love it finds abiding satisfaction. When we realize the fellowship of Jesus Christ we know we have got hold of the eternal good. Let actualities be what they may, we know ourselves called of God to ever higher, better life, and we know He is faithful. Trust the upward look of the soul, both in moral disappointment and in sorrow; God will be faithful to you.

> What is life for, save, in growth
> Of soul, to rise up, far past both,
> From the gift looking to the giver,
> And from the cistern to the river,
> And from the infinite to infinity,
> And from man's dust to God's divinity.[1]

[1] T. R. Williams, *God's Open Doors*, 110.

Fellowship with Christ

1 Cor. i. 9.—'Called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.'

THE great word of this passage which at once arrests our attention is the word 'fellowship.' It is a rich and spacious word, full of suggestiveness, almost impossible of full and final translation. And that fact is borne out by this, that the word which is here translated 'fellowship' is translated in many ways in the New Testament—fellowship, contribution, communication, communion, partakers, partners. All these are needed in our language if we are to have any idea of this one great word, the word descriptive of the great and gracious fact of our friendship with Jesus Christ.

Let us select from these different words two, which mark two phases of the one great fact. Let us take that rich word of the Church, 'communion,' and let us take one of those common nouns, rendering it in its abstract fashion, and say the word means 'partnership.' We use these words in different relations. We use the word 'communion' in the realm of friendship; we use the word 'partnership' in the realm of business; and by selecting these two words we shall come to a better understanding of what this fellowship with Christ means.

1. *Fellowship as Communion.*—We know what it is to turn the eye inward and hold communion with our own souls. We know what it is to come into close and sacred oneness with a cherished friend. We know what it is to catch the thought of a favourite author and fall under the spell of his genius. We know what it is to draw near to the heart of Nature, and let stars and flowers, clouds and mountains,

[1] Browning.

running brooks and wide sweeping landscapes, speak to us in 'a various language,' and fill us with delight in the beauty and order of the wonderful world about us. Is fellowship with our Lord suggested, or outlined, or to any appreciable degree interpreted to us in these experiences? Most assuredly. Only it must be understood that this intimacy is something far deeper, finer, richer, and more inspiring than any experience to which we can liken it, or any analogy under which we can set it forth.

It is a human personality maintaining a mind-to-mind and heart-to-heart relation with a Divine personality. It is opening all the inlets of our being to the influence of Jesus. It is living, thinking, struggling, hoping, forming our plans and reaching our conclusions in a mental and moral atmosphere created by the presence of Jesus. It is talking with Jesus in the mood of a familiar and unobstructed friendship in which nothing is kept from Him, but all is stated—all is confessed; and all in turn is received from Him which He wishes to communicate.

¶ Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort, of feeling safe with a person; having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pour them all right out just as they are, chaff and grain together, knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and with the breath of kindness blow the rest away.[1]

¶ Dryden, describing his relationship with his truest friend, said: 'We were so mixed up as meeting streams, both to ourselves were lost. We were one mass. We could not give or take but for the same, for he was I, I he.'

There are few friends with whom any of us could safely venture to be so frank and self-disclosing as all of us ought to be day by day with our Lord. The closer we keep to Him in thought and desire, the less shall we be inclined to go astray, the ampler will be our knowledge of truth, the clearer our vision of duty, the firmer the alliance between our wills and the Divine will, and the deeper and more rewarding our joy in believing. Indeed, if we are to know Christ in a deep personal way; if we are to feel what Dr Emrich has called 'the impelling force of His life and spirit'; if we are to realize with an increasing definiteness and power of constraint exactly what He would have us—each of us—to do and to become, it is essential that we be much and often and entirely alone with Him. How subtle, but how marked, are the differences between the tone and atmosphere of a man who is accustomed to hold communion with Jesus, and the tone and atmosphere of a man who has no direct and conscious fellowship with Him. In each soul in which Jesus has a home—a settled abiding place—He makes His gracious presence evident by tokens which are alike sweet and convincing.

As some rare perfume in a vase of clay
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own,
So, when Thou dwellest in a mortal soul,
All heaven's own sweetness seems around it thrown.[1]

2. *Fellowship as Partnership.*—If we are to enjoy this intimacy with Christ to the full we must come into active partnership with Him in accomplishing the ends for which He came into the world.

(1) The first of these is winning the individual man into right relations with God. It is to make the impure, pure; the disloyal, loyal; the far-away, near; the enemies of truth and righteousness, the friends of truth and righteousness; and to restore those who have disinherited themselves by sin to the joy and triumph of the Kingdom. It is to fit human souls for the best things in the life that now is and for the best things in the life to come. As William Newton Clark puts it: 'Jesus is the Great Teacher, and His mission covers the whole field, and the ideal that He seeks is the perfect life in ethics and in religion.'

I ought to bend to the lowest,
I ought, and therefore I can;
I was made to the end that I might descend
On the steps of the Son of Man.
Love has a hem of its garment
That reaches the very dust,
It can reach the stains of the streets and the lanes,
And because it can, it must.

(2) The second is to reconstruct the society in which one has an immediate and responsible membership, and place it on the basis of justice, fair play, and common brotherhood—to induce households, neighbourhoods, cities, and nations

[1] Mrs Craik, *Life for a Life.*

[1] Harriet Beecher Stowe.

with which one may have corporate connection to organize their life and conduct their affairs on the principles of rigid integrity and mutual helpfulness. It is to adjust home life, social life, business and politics to Christian standards.

(3) The third is to carry the knowledge of redeeming love through Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth, and to keep at this high and holy task of evangelizing and uplifting the human race till the purpose for which God was manifest in the flesh has been realized in universal righteousness. Phillips Brooks has well said: 'The foreign missionary idea is the necessary completion of the Christian life. It is the apex to which all the lines of the pyramid lead up. The Christian life without it is an imperfect, mangled thing.'

¶ 'Jesus Christ challenges us to be His knights to go forth into the world to make it better. In 1883, when I was a young medical student in London Hospital, I walked into a tent down in Shadwell. I had no idea in going in beyond the fact that I was attracted by the crowd. When I got inside the tent I heard a man praying and I was turning to come out again when I heard another man say, "Let's have a hymn while our brother here is finishing his prayer." I said to some one near me, "Who's that man?" and the reply was, "Why, that's the preacher." I made up my mind to stay and listen (the man was D. L. Moody), and when I came out of that tent I knew that the call of Christ had come to *me*. I heard Christ's challenge and accepted it, and for thirty-five years I have been going on with His work in Labrador. I sailed for Labrador in a fishing boat. At one end of the vessel we had the words, "Preach the Word," and at the other end, "Heal the sick." Nine-tenths of my staff are volunteers. Love is the force, the dynamic, by which God enables us to serve and save the world. And He works through us in the common things and common ways of everyday life. God calls to us because He needs us.'[1]

The regeneration of the individual, the regeneration of society, the regeneration of the race—this is the Divine programme. To give thought, to lend a hand, to exert influence to forward these ends is to meet the conditions of intimacy with Christ. Not to do these things is to close the doors and render intimacy with Him impossible.

[1] Wilfred T. Grenfell.

The Unity of Christ

1 Cor. i. 13.—'Is Christ divided?'

THE Church has had to contend not only that there is only one Christ, but also that Christ is one. St Paul had to tell the Corinthians that while paganism had gods many and lords many, yet 'to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him'; which is perhaps as near a credal statement as we get in the New Testament. For us to-day the unity of Christ presents a problem of a different order from what it did to these Corinthians. For our generation Christ has been divided, not into two persons, not between different historic figures, but in His very self.

Let us ask ourselves whether Christ presents a real Unity.

1. There is a unity in Christ which no one can miss. He is a moral unity. Jesus is a thoroughly unified person, in complete inner harmony with Himself. This is generally seen in the fact that He is unconscious of sin; about that there is no possibility of question so far as our Gospels are faithful to Him. There are only two things that can be set against this fact as even casting a shadow of doubt upon it. One is that Jesus submitted to the baptism of John, which was a baptism unto repentance. Now that does need explanation. St Matthew and St John see this difficulty, and each meets it in his own way. St Matthew records that in answer to John's surprise that He should seek baptism of him, Jesus said, 'Suffer it now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness'; while St John quotes the Baptist's words, 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,' which might imply that Jesus was vicariously bearing the sins of the world, and thus sought baptism. These statements are not to be dismissed as theological afterthoughts, for they all agree in what was the experience of the baptism: a declaration that Jesus was the Beloved Son of the Father, and the descent upon Him of the Spirit.

I stood by Jordan and there came a man,—
I knew him not, for I know no one,—nay,

Not mine own kin. This desert is my home.
He came to seek my baptism, but I winced
Whenas I bade him to confess himself.
Somehow I felt that bitterly I'd hear
The sins of such as he. He seemed so pure.
His flaxen clustered hair shone in the light
As of the sun's own colour, and his brow
Was noble (Julius the Roman Lord,
Whom the blind Gentiles worship as a God,
Had not a nobler mien), and this man too
Was kind and tender. In his gentle gaze
A child could read a mercy infinite. . . .

Silent he mused awhile.
Then I did comfort me, 'He knows no sin.'
When he had mused, he sighed, and then began.
Oh, sorrow upon sorrow! Sin on sin!
My spirit quailed to hear this stranger speak,
For, not as other penitents, said he,
'This did I do and that,' but all man's heart,
Man's selfish, godless heart, he laid stark bare
Before me in its ugliness, its shame,
The cruel failure of a plan divine.

'My son, my son!' I cried, 'Thou dost confess
The sins of all mankind. I asked thine own.
Not thine own soul is this thou barest to me.
Thine own, from a clear sunlit mountain-peak,
Looks down, as on a mist-wrapt fen on this,
The soul, bemired, of the essential man.
Thy heart is clean, and so nought hinders thee
To be baptized. Leave other men their faults.'

A keen reproach lit up his loving orbs.
'John! John!' he said, 'Does Satan speak through thee?
I am a man, and shall I pass men by?
Nay, God forbid that I should pass them by.
They are my brothers, let me bear their shame.
Shall I make boast of cleanness leaving them
All stained and helpless? John, thou too hast wept.
Thou too hast borne the sins of others here
Grieving by Jordan for our guilty race.
So let me bear earth's burden to her God.'

He finished his confession while I sat
Rebuked and sad, and when the tale was done
The sun was veiled and the cold twilight air
Stirred in the trees which, like dark giants, hung
Above the water. Silent, I mused aghast.
So great, so black the world's disease now seemed,
So feeble seemed my water-washing now
To cleanse these stains. 'Rise thou and baptize me,'
I cried at length, 'Baptize the world and me,
With fire or with some holy breath, O Christ';
And at his feet I knelt.[1]

The second objection to Christ's sinlessness is found in His answer given to the rich young ruler's salutation: 'Why callest thou me good? None is good save God.' If anyone claims that this repudiation of goodness points to a consciousness of sin, he must first prove that the famous question does involve a repudiation of goodness. It is equally arguable that it is a demand for the open acknowledgment of Godhead; but even on the more widely received interpretation it reveals unconsciousness of goodness, not consciousness of sin, and thus betrays a consciousness quite beyond our ordinary ethical distinctions. It is a fact that in all His self-revelation Jesus never once discloses consciousness of sin, never refers to that need for confession and repentance which He laid upon others, while this negative evidence is confirmed by His positive consistency of aim. Jesus has but one object in this life, and that is the fulfilment of His Father's will and the redemption of needy and lost humanity. Along with this has to be taken the fact that He never declared specifically in so many words that He was conscious of being Divine; but it is implied, it is accepted, the confession of it is sought from others. There is no such unity combined with such a content to be found in history, and this unity can be explained only on the Church's confession that His was a Divine Personality.

¶ Scripture is a succession of saintly biographies all upon one type, the penitential. By a sudden transition there springs up one solitary instance of a completely opposite type, which vanishes, and never reappears. But the solitary and insulated unpenitential type makes also a solitary assumption of worth, and the assumption is part of the portrait.[2]

And yet this moral unity is also an accomplishment; for Jesus was subject to temptation. The Gospels give sufficient evidence of that. The temptation in the wilderness must be regarded as a symbolical account conveyed by His own disclosure. It is a temptation

[1] W. W. D. Gardiner.
[2] J. B. Mozley, in *Contemporary Review*, vii. 495.

concerning the means He shall use for bringing the world to the knowledge of the truth, and it repudiates, firstly, taking Himself out of the ordinary dependence of a human being on material needs; secondly, using startling means to impress the world of His Divine power; thirdly, employing worldly methods for the advancement of His Kingdom. Incidentally it reveals what Jesus thought Himself to be. But where does this temptation come from? Not from His own nature, but from His circumstances. He has entered into earthly conditions. How far is He to evade or use them? It is a temptation possible only to the Son of God entering upon an earthly mission.

2. This moral unity consists in holding together things which elsewhere we find opposed. Mankind must walk round Jesus to see Him in the whole, and they can only do this successively, the different points of view where they stand serving to bring into relief different aspects; and these have never yet been unified, because they have generally been accompanied by a denial of what cannot be seen from any given point of view. Take the idea, prevalent some time ago and still fighting for foothold, that Jesus was absolutely indifferent to economic questions. From one aspect He was, namely, that it did not matter what economic conditions you lived *under*, but not at all when it comes to considering what conditions you lived *on*. It has taken the economic interest of our times to reveal that. A former generation saw in the Gospels nothing but the proclamation of a scheme for the saving of the individual; our generation can hardly detect a reference to it.

¶ The partisans of individual Christianity are right in this: the Christian gospel seeks the redemption of personality. Men and women are the infinitely valuable children of God. Christianity ardently desires to save them from every enemy that cripples and enslaves them, to unfold their possibilities, to lead them out into spiritual triumph and abundant life. And the partisans of social Christianity are right in this: that you cannot really be in earnest about saving personality and still neglect the social life from which personality springs and by which it is tremendously affected.[1]

We have to overcome, in the name of honesty and common sense, the antitheses into which Christ has been run out. There are ecclesiastics whose sole concern seems to be merely with keeping the Church going as an institution, with the due performance of its rites and ceremonies, and with encouraging people to be diligent in their religious duties; while they are proportionately unconcerned with ethical and social questions. And there are the people who declare that Jesus Christ had no use for institutions, ritual, or sacraments; but that He was concerned solely with the interior motive or with proclaiming a new order of society to be necessary. As a matter of fact, Jesus had no objections to an institution, save where it infringed upon considerations of humanity. He did not abolish the Sabbath, He humanized it; He did not abolish the Temple, He cleansed it.

Again, it is a common modern distinction to set over against one another as exclusive the ethical teaching of Jesus and the place His person has in it. It is held by many that the ethical teaching of Jesus is the soundest sense and sublimest morality this world has ever heard, but that it can be followed without any personal attachment to Him or without the slightest necessity for following the Teacher as well as the teaching. But we find again and again in the Synoptics that Christ is central to His teaching: 'for my sake and the gospel's.' There are no doubt those who say, Lord, Lord, who do not do what Christ tells them; but He does not recommend that they should cease to call Him Lord in order the better to obey Him.

3. The unity of Christ is set forth very wonderfully in His capacity for writing out in human terms the character and nature of God. It is necessary to keep in mind what Christ had to unite; He had to unite the human and the Divine nature in order to reveal the Divine and to make it humanly intelligible. This was a tremendous task, but it could be done, because the nature of the Divine is not in its essence either omniscience, omnipotence or omnipresence, but simply love. This is the task which Christ has accomplished. What is revealed thereby is the intense personality of God. God as known to us in Jesus is, in the fullest meaning of the word, *personal*—indeed, the only perfectly personal being. The rest of us are not nearly masters of ourselves, we are

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *The Meaning of Service*, 35.

as subject to moods as the sea to storm and the sky to cloud. This is what we mean by personality—that which we see in Jesus. And it means that always there is in God a heart that understands, something to which we can appeal, one who will respond. No one, not our mother, not our lover, not ourselves can understand so surely and respond so perfectly. Therefore, the idea that, in Christ, the Eternal Word occupied the place of a human personality shows forth manhood and Godhead in perfect unity; and this was possible because man was made in God's image. Jesus is therefore true God and true man; the rest of us are something less than man until we are united more closely to God.

It is the business of the Church to maintain this unity. Long before we can get the unity of the Churches we want the unity of Christianity, built upon the unity of Christ. It means the most intense devotional attachment to our Lord, together with a character shaped by that and solely with the desire of glorifying Him here and seeing Him hereafter. It means the undertaking of social reform, because without that expression we shall lose our souls, here and elsewhere. The whole Christ for the whole man, for the whole Church, and for the whole world; nothing less will suffice.

The Simplicity of the Gospel

1 Cor. i. 17.—'For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.'

1. The simplicity of the gospel of God's Word to the world through Jesus Christ is a thing of which we often and rightly speak. We see it to be characteristic in several ways. Our Lord finds in the little child the pattern of those who enter the Kingdom. It was the simple folk, largely, who answered to the call of Jesus Himself, and afterwards of His Apostles; just as is the case in the mission field to-day. And the religion which was to travel the world, and offer itself to Greek and Barbarian, to simple and advanced races, to East and West, must needs be simple. For only what is simple can be adapted, or adapt itself to many sorts of men.

¶ Joseph Thomson, in his *Life of Mungo Park*, makes this remark about Muhammadanism: 'There was an adaptability and a simplicity about it well suited to the comprehension of untutored minds, and in that lay the secret of a success such as has never since been even distantly approached by any other propagandist religion in Africa.' Whether this comment be just or not, the connection between simplicity and success is historically close.

But in what did the simplicity of Christ consist? In this first, that what was offered to men came through fact and as fact. 'Truth,' the poet says, 'embodied in a tale shall enter in by lowly doors.' 'A tale,' the tale or history of a life, a character, a person. First, the life and person to those among whom He lived; then the tale of it and of Him to those that come after.

When our Lord came, He found in the world the Greek wisdom and the Jewish Law. But only a few could learn the wisdom, and 'the world by wisdom knew not God.' It took scribes and lawyers to understand the Law, and the name which they gave to the ordinary folk around them was 'this people who knoweth not the Law.' In contrast to this, look at Jesus; His gospel facts speak to all. 'The common people,' who could not follow the scribes, 'heard him gladly.' It was a new, limpid teaching in simplicity.

And to-day the children and the simple people prove to us again the simplicity of the gospel; not its shallowness, or narrowness, or commonness, but its simplicity, which is a very different quality. For simplicity may carry a great deal in it; it may be the result, as the noblest lines and best passages in poetry and prose remind us, of the very finest art; it may contain the most profound truth; it may be charged with intense feeling and with crowding associations.

Lord, with the children's wisdom make us wise;
For to simplicity Thou dost reveal
The way unto Thyself, and dost unseal
The mysteries that baffle learning's eyes.
We crave the knowledge that for ever lies
Deeper than words. It is enough to feel
Thy presence ever bringing hopes that heal,
Light that can lead, and love that satisfies.
Thy silence hath more meaning than our speech;
And so, beyond our wordy strife and vain,
By sorrowing and gladness, loss and gain,

Bring us into Thy quietness, and teach
Those deep simplicities that mock the brain,
Yet lie within the heart's most easy reach.[1]

The gospel, however, is other things besides simple. If we think, as we ought, of the simplicity that is in Christ, let us be sure that we remember also the fullness. This fullness is seen most clearly if we keep on Bible ground. Jesus Christ, it must always be remembered, is not as one who came by chance when He came. He does not stand alone and detached upon the page of history. Never were God's laws of gradual growth, or ordered progress, more fully complied with; never was there anything so delicately and perfectly fitted to just the place and time at which it came as the coming or manifestation of Christ. This means, of course, that in what went before Him there was much which—to use the common Scripture word—He had to fulfil, and of which, therefore, the meanings were gathered up unto Himself, so that He was all which they were, and more.

Think of an instance or two. (1) Take the faith in a true dwelling of God with His people. See how it is purified and enlarged. The rough belief or superstition of many races about a god of their own, who somehow dwells within their frontier, and is accessible to them alone, and has his place in the temple that is made for him, was purified in Israel into the faith in God who is the God of all nations, and 'sitteth upon the circle of the earth,' but who yet is especially present in Zion. But the prophets are always straining forward to something more than this, when the kingship of God among them should be made more clear, and He should dwell among them in some fuller way. Earth and heaven were to come nearer, and God was to be in some way more clearly revealed among men and to come nearer to them. Ezekiel tells of a coming day of which God has told him. 'My tabernacle shall be with them, I will be their God; my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.' We see, then, how much was fulfilled when the 'Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among men.' Into the fullness of that simplicity how much hope was gathered up!

(2) Again, there was built up among the Jews, as we read in Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, a great fabric of sacrifice and worship, like in many respects to those of other nations, but unlike in the shape and direction and spirit given to the whole. Evidently the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews feels that the meaning of all this must be found in Christ, if those who have had it are to pass on to Him; and all his argument is to show that the precious blood of Jesus does what the blood of the Old Testament victims did only in figure; that the work of the priests, and all the meaning of the Holy Place and of the priests' entrance into it, all the fullness of that must somehow be found in Jesus of Nazareth, and in His work for man.

(3) Or, leaving the preparation for Christ, see what fullness that simplicity of Christ and Him crucified carried in it for St Paul; how fearlessly he uses it as the very key of all moral living, which is dying to sin with Christ that we may live unto God; how it gives him a meaning and a rule of all his sorrows and sufferings.

Thus it becomes plainer to us what simplicity does not mean, as well as what it does, when we speak of simplicity in Christ, or of Christian life and truth as simple. Simple, but full; simple, but deep; simple as what the child and the poor can understand, but such as reverent thought must continually explore, and none can exhaust, and time and eternity alone can illustrate.

2. The simplicity and the fullness of the gospel—these two thoughts comprise so much of all that we mean when we think of our faith, and bear so much upon all our understanding and treatment of it, that applications crowd upon us. It is only possible to select some which seem of special value.

(1) There is guidance here for all *the Church's work of witness for Christ.* That witness loses all power when it loses simplicity. Christ living, speaking, working, dying, rising, reigning, Christ making His own impression on the conscience, imagination, and feelings of men—this is its burthen. We must let men feel the simple force of the truths of forgiveness, of new life, of judgment, of union between God and man, of spiritual nourishment, and all of these as somehow through Christ, known through Him, and working through Him. The simple things must come first, they must have the largest place; and whatever else there is must come in to illustrate and explain, and give effect to these simple things.

¶ When I first went to India I was trying to

[1] P. C. Ainsworth, *Poems and Sonnets*, 77.

hold a very long line—a line that stretched clear from Genesis to Revelation, on to Western Civilization and to the Western Christian Church. I found myself bobbing up and down that line fighting behind Moses and David and Jesus and Paul and Western Civilization and the Christian Church. I was worried. There was no well-defined issue. I found the battle almost invariably being pitched at one of these three places: the Old Testament, or Western Civilization, or the Christian Church. I had the ill-defined but instinctive feeling that the heart of the matter was being left out. Then I saw that I could, and should, shorten my line, that I could take my stand at Christ and before that non-Christian world refuse to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The sheer storm and stress of things had driven me to a place that I could hold. Then I saw that there is where I should have been all the time. I saw that the gospel lies in the person of Jesus, that He Himself is the Good News, that my one task was to live and to present Him. My task was simplified.[1]

(2) The same thoughts apply to *our worship*. There are two central acts of Christian worship—the Lord's Prayer and the memorial of the Lord's death. Both have the hall-mark of simplicity. The child and the childlike can understand both. Neither, indeed, has that elementary simplicity which belongs to the first untaught cries of the heart. 'God help me! God be merciful to me a sinner!' For they are full as well as simple. It would be a false simplicity which should forbid our drawing out the meanings of the Lord's Prayer in varied offices and litanies; or which should insist on our merely breaking bread and pouring wine at a table with Christ's own words, and would not let us surround what is so done with a stately order of praise and prayer, of confession and thanksgiving. A worship may be full and rich, and yet remain, for learned and unlearned alike, the expression of touchingly simple Christian meanings. But let us beware lest we think that we honour the living fact by decorating it, and perhaps lose vital contact with it altogether.

¶ In some of the Roman Catholic cathedrals and churches of the old world, we may see statues of the infant Christ by the erection of which a poor, groping worship has tried to symbolize its homage for its Lord. It has not been content even with the statue itself, but it has gone on to deck it out in stiff brocaded silks and crowns and great flashy jewels; so that there is a wide, wide gap between that pathetic, gaudy doll and the simplicity of Jesus. In the Holy Land, the spot which is supposed to be the ground of the manger where Mary's child was laid, and the rock which is supposed to be the place of crucifixion, alike are buried and hidden beneath over-decorated shrines. None of the poignant genuineness of that holy ground is left.[1]

¶ Our Lord stood for a simplicity in religion which has sometimes been forgotten. Time and again the Church has half lost her soul in the intricacies of dogma or ceremonial. Great and fine these things are so long as they reveal, but far from great and fine when, instead of that, they shut up God and draw curtains round that which should be plain and clear and beautiful. They are the Church's windows. They should let in the light, not keep it out.[2]

(3) As it is with truth and worship, so it is with *our own personal lives*. Let us have, at any cost, a simple religion; for only a simple one will really pierce and command our conscience; only a simple one will stand strain, will hold fast in the day of doubt or in the hour of death. But let us learn from Christ the true simplicity. Let us find it in the continual thought of the presence of God; in duty done in things small and great as to Him, and love turned towards Him as by children to their father; in daily following of Christ; in humble trust in the meaning and sufficiency of His awful work upon the Cross; in remembrance of judgment, pointed to by conscience, declared by Jesus. These, and such as these, are the features of a simple religion.

Here, again, simplicity must go with fullness. There must be nothing cheap, nothing shallow, nothing easy, and above all, nothing that stops short and stands still in our religion. The things of God are exceeding deep and very high. The truth of God and His Holy Word has always new meanings to show us and new lessons to teach. We ought to live as men of faith in a world of wonder, and feel the things of God about us, and His Spirit with us helping, strengthening, teaching the spirits of His re-

[1] E. Stanley Jones, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, 16.

[1] W. R. Bowie, *The Inescapable Christ*, 79.

[2] F. Theodore Woods, *Great Tasks and Great Inspirations*, 94.

deemed that along the blessed ways of simple faith and obedience they may be admitted to some share in the fullness that is of God.

The Word of the Cross

1 Cor. i. 18.—'The word of the cross' (R.V.).

THESE words are more striking than is apparent from the translation given in the Authorized Version. The 'Preaching of the Cross,' as the familiar rendering is, does not do justice to the original phrase. The 'Preaching of the Cross' suggests what may be described as evangelical preaching—that type of preaching which makes the Cross its chief, and indeed its only, subject. A distinction seems to be implied between various kinds of discourses—ethical, philosophical, biographical, and so on—but these are all left out of account; and the discourses which are declared to be invested with the power of God unto salvation are those which concentrate on 'Jesus Christ and Him Crucified.' The 'Preaching' that is worthy of the name of preaching, the 'Preaching' that avails to save sinners, is—our text seems to insist—the 'Preaching of the Cross.'

Now, the truth of what has just been said will probably not be called in question by any of us. It summarizes what we believe. But the reference in the original is really to another matter. Accurately translated, as it is in the Revised Version, the expression which St Paul used is, 'The Word of the Cross.' The Cross, and not any human being, is represented as the speaker. To the Cross there is attributed a power of utterance. It has something to say, something audible to reveal to those who have 'ears to hear.'

Inscriptions on ancient monuments, erected to celebrate an historic incident, or the virtues of a person who had departed this life, not infrequently began with the Latin words 'Sta viator!' The English equivalent for that arresting phrase is, 'Stay, oh traveller!' It was an invitation, or rather an appeal, addressed to passers-by, to halt and consider what it was, or who it was, that the monument commemorated. 'Sta viator! Stay, oh traveller!' is the salutation of the Cross to wayfaring mortals. The Cross has a word to communicate to each one of us. There streams from the Cross an influence which produces a sense of awe and wonder. But it speaks as well. It is charged with the capacity not only of quickening feelings, but also of awakening thoughts. In one of his noble frescoes, Giotto does justice to that fact. Faith is represented by him in the form of a figure holding a cross in one hand and a scroll in the other. The Cross is interpretable. The understanding of beholders is appealed to. It gives utterance to a word.

1. The 'Word of the Cross' is addressed to our *consciences*. It is that fact which gives the Cross its title to a universal hearing. Otherwise, its speech, while significant and moving, could not authoritatively claim the attention of mankind at large. The Cross draws all men to itself, because it has something to say which concerns all. No human being can afford to shut his eyes to the spectacle of the Cross, or close his ears to its voice. 'Sta viator!' it cries: 'Stay, oh traveller, whoever you be, and from whatever land you come!' The Cross appeals to every wayfarer on the journey of life. It beseeches all who would pass by in pre-occupied haste, to tarry and listen. For it has that to communicate to each one of us, which relates to our deepest necessity.

¶ In *The Secret*, a fine but unfinished poem which seeks to represent Christianity as the flower and crown of all religion, Goethe draws a picture of man in his pilgrimage through the world in search of the highest good, coming at last to the Cross:

He sees, betokening hope and consolation
To all mankind, the Sign upraiséd high:
He sees the Cross, then lowers his veiléd eyes;
He feels how great salvation thence proceedeth;
The faith of half a world glows in his heart once more.[1]

Our deepest necessity may not be the necessity which is engaging us at the moment. Some anxiety, the object of which is of no great worth and the satisfaction of which promises but a transient measure of happiness, may be absorbing our thoughts. But when things fall into their true proportions, as they do at times with all of us; when the issues of life and conduct are seen in their proper perspective, as they are by every one at certain seasons; then we perceive what our deepest

[1] J. Hunter, *De Profundis Clamavi*, 76.

necessity is. Set squarely over against reality, undistracted by the glamour of worldly affairs, divested of the mask wherewith we would fain disguise ourselves and play a part before our fellows—out in the open, self-discovered, remembering, solitary—we realize that what we need above everything is the forgiveness of God.

Is it not so? Are there any alarms like the alarms of a guilty and awakened conscience? Who does not know what it is to stand aghast at the folly of one's doings, to experience a shudder of shame and terror at the secret treachery and selfishness of one's life? Unintelligible to others, the 'Word of the Cross' is understood by all such persons, for it utters what they most need to hear. It announces the forgiveness of God as only a Cross could, which held on its outstretched beams the Sacrifice which took away the sin of the world—as only a Cross could, which revealed the tragedy involved in Divine forgiveness.

2. The 'Word of the Cross' is addressed to our *hearts*. It is a Word of rich and abundant consolation. The Cross not only confronts the sin of the world; it also recognizes and calms the sorrow. Its message, as directed to this need, may not be appreciated by every one. For there are some too young to understand what sorrow means, while there are others who seem to have grown old without ever having passed through its fires. Those, however, with whom things have not always gone well, who have seen their hopes frustrated, who have stooped beneath a burden of disappointment, whose homes have been overshadowed with darkness—they know the anguish which the Cross alone can comfort.

Why should the 'Word of the Cross' possess this virtue? Why should it minister peace to those who are in trouble? That question cannot be answered fully. But we get a glimpse of one reason at all events. Never was the Divine Providence more enigmatical and more apparently unjustified than it was in the life of Jesus Christ. Never was there a more amazing lack of correspondence between merit and lot than there was in His case. Hatred and mocking, betrayal and scourging—for Christ! A Cross amidst the derision of the bystanders—for Him 'who knew no sin, and in whose mouth guile was not found'! There is no expression in human language that can do justice to the appalling discrepancy between the deserts and the experiences of the Son of God at the hands of the Father. It is that fact, it is the victorious way in which He accepted the Father's Will and justified the Providence ordained for Him, that makes us feel that our sorrows are included in His. The Word of the Cross, speaking out of an ordeal before which our particular sufferings pale into insignificance, reconciles us to their weight and consoles us. 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.'

¶ 'A boy who had seen his brother's body broken before his eyes,' wrote a Chaplain at the Front in the summer of 1915, after his Brigade had been through an absolute inferno, 'crept back into his dug-out and fixed a little drawing on its wall. He drew a cross and a sunrise, and wrote the simple inscription, "God is love." So he reassured himself, and incidentally his friends who happened to see what he had done. That is the kind of reassurance we need here in defiance of the daily challenge to faith, and, thank God, it is not withheld.' One could not ask for a more perfect type of the simplicity of faith, and of the way in which the Cross, meeting it, gives it 'the victory which hath overcome the world.' But the Cross also says its say where faith is far less simple, and almost overwhelmed with doubt; as in the case of one who, in the agony of a great sorrow, involving at the same time a fierce challenge to faith, found himself crying out involuntarily, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me,'—and then remembered when and by Whom those words were spoken, and so won back to the light.[1]

3. The 'Word of the Cross' is addressed to our *wills*. Its message, as directed to the will, is not heard by those who have not first received with wonder and gratitude its message as directed to the conscience. They are not aware of being under any debt of obligation for its assurance of forgiveness, and, consequently, they are actuated by no impulse of grateful obedience. But even in the case of those of us who believe that we have welcomed the Word which the Cross speaks to the conscience, is there not a reluctance to hear it out when it speaks to the will?

We forget, or we choose to ignore the fact,

[1] E. A. Burroughs, *The Valley of Decision*, 224.

that the vicarious element in the death of Christ is not only the ground of our forgiveness, but also represents a principle of Christian conduct. The Cross, most emphatically, announces pardon; but it surely imposes a law upon our life too. We must listen to it with our wills, as well as with our consciences and hearts. It is a commonplace of Christian testimony to speak of 'bearing the Cross.' But we are not to wait until some distressing experience comes before we begin to bear it. The Cross is to be taken up. It comes to us as a principle of action to be obeyed in choices and purposes. It is to 'be borne' daily, and manifested in a life of self-sacrifice. Conformity to the Cross is 'foolishness' in the eyes of those whose ruling passion is to promote their own interests with the utmost prudence, and defend them with the utmost jealousy. It is so contrary to our natural feelings to sacrifice ourselves, that the Apostle's term is the only appropriate one: it is downright 'foolishness.'

And yet, it is such 'foolish' men and women, and they alone, who are taking the religion of Christ seriously, and are not playing with its obligations. And it is only in the spirit of apostolic 'folly' that the tasks of the Kingdom of God at home and abroad will ever be faced and fulfilled with the certainty of success. Heathendom will never be converted by the measured, unbelieving, conventional devotion which characterizes a great part of Christendom. God forbid that it should ever be converted to such a devotion! For the 'Word of the Cross' calls for a service, conceived and carried out in another spirit altogether, calls for a love which devises heroic things, and for a will which is in complete captivity to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

¶ A Hindu lecturer on educational subjects was addressing an audience of educationalists in South India when he paused and said: 'I see that a good many of you here are Christians. Now, this is not a religious lecture, but I would like to pause long enough to say that, if you Christians would live like Jesus Christ, India would be at your feet to-morrow.' [1]

[1] E. Stanley Jones, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, 143.

THE FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING

1 Cor. i. 21.—'For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.'

Nothing is more remarkable in Christian history than the prominence given to preaching and the Church's faith in its efficacy. Week after week and year after year, with unwearying persistence, from thousands of pulpits the same old gospel is proclaimed. Has it ever struck you as a foolish and a futile thing? There are many who so regard it, and who pass the doors of our Churches with contempt. Let us hear, then, what St Paul has to say about it, for the first chapter of 1 Corinthians is the most triumphant vindication of simple gospel preaching that has ever been written.

I

PREACHING DESPISED

St Paul found that the preaching of the gospel was despised in his day. Especially was this so among the Greeks, who regarded the whole business as unspeakably absurd. At Athens, the intellectual centre of Greece, they looked on the Apostle with an amused and tolerant curiosity. 'What will this babbler say'? they asked. They had enough and to spare of itinerant philosophers and wandering teachers who picked up a precarious living. St Paul was just another specimen, a bit of a psychological novelty perhaps, an entertainment for an idle hour, but not to be taken seriously by any educated person. And when they so far condescended as to listen to him and get some inkling of his meaning, they found that his message, in the monstrous absurdity of it, surpassed anything that the craziest brain had ever imagined. He had the story to tell of some Jew who had been crucified in Jerusalem, a malefactor doubtless, else he would never have come to so shameful an end. And he makes a serious offer of this crucified one as the Saviour

of the world, he would have all men regard him

> As—God forgive me ! who but God himself,
> Creator and sustainer of the world,
> That came and dwelt in flesh on it awhile ! [1]

The man was obviously mad, and his message too ridiculous for words.

Now that the Cross has been glorified and surrounded with a halo of sanctity it is impossible for us to realize how offensive and contemptible the preaching of the Cross must, at the first, have been. It seemed an outrage to all decency and good taste, an insult alike to intelligence and right moral feeling. When the barrack room of the Prætorian Guard on the Palatine Hill in ancient Rome was being excavated, a caricature of the crucifixion was discovered, drawn doubtless by some soldier's hand. It is a rude drawing of a cross on which hangs a man with an ass's head. At the foot a figure kneels in an attitude of adoration, and underneath is written in Greek, 'Alexamenos worships his God.' [2] In such contempt was the preaching of the Cross held in the days of the Apostles.

Reading history one finds this note of contempt continually recurring. The wise of the world have ever been apt to look upon the preaching of the Cross as foolishness. Bishop Butler found it so in his day. 'It is come,' he writes, 'I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but it is now, at length, discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it, as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule.' [3] Nearly a century later we find the poet Shelley venturing to predict that Christianity will soon be obsolete, 'That Milton's poem alone will give permanency to the remembrance of its absurdities; and that men will laugh as heartily at grace, faith, redemption, and original sin, as they now do at the efficacy of witchcraft, and the appearance of departed spirits.' [4] Few, perhaps, would care to be so outspoken, but polite indifference may equally express contempt, and it is only too sadly manifest that there are multitudes of educated people, in our own time, who regard the preacher's message as entirely negligible, while the man in the street, with more bluntness, is ready to dismiss the whole subject as 'tosh.' Perhaps this is not to be wondered at, for it has been very truly said, 'There is nothing farther out of nature's reach, and more remote from the natural man's liking and believing, than the doctrine of Redemption by a Saviour, and by a crucified Saviour.' [1]

[1] Browning, *Epistle of Karshish.*
[2] G. Boissier, *Rome and Pompeii.*
[3] J. Butler, *Analogy* (Preface).
[4] *Notes to Queen Mab.*

II

PREACHING VINDICATED

Now St Paul is not in the least dismayed by the contempt of the wise for his message. He actually glories in this foolishness of preaching. It is the foolishness of God which is wiser than men, and the weakness of God which is stronger than men. One is reminded of the high regard which Jesus Himself had for the simple and the childlike. While the Jewish leaders were saying one to another, 'Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him' (Jn. vii. 48), as if that settled the matter, Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, 'I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight' (Mt. xi. 25).

St Paul's argument in defence of preaching is twofold.

1. First, he turns the tables on his critics by pointing out that the wisdom of the world has failed. 'The world by wisdom knew not God.' 'No safer assertion regarding the ancient world can be made,' remarks Dr Dods.[2] 'To pass even from Plato to the Gospel of John is really to pass from darkness to light. Plato philosophises, and a few souls seem for a moment to see things more clearly; Peter preaches, and three thousand souls spring to life. If God was to be known by men generally, it was not through the influence of philosophy. Already philosophy had done its utmost; and so far as any popular and sanctifying knowledge of God

[1] S. T. Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, 106.
[2] *Expositor's Bible*, 1 Corinthians, 54.

went, philosophy might as well never have been.'

This failure the ancient world itself was fain to confess. When St Paul came to Athens he found there an altar with the inscription 'To the Unknown God,' and he was able to say to them, 'Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you' (Acts xvii. 23). Ah, there the preacher of the gospel had them. Out of their own mouth he was able to convict them of failure to bring men near to God. And they could not very well deny the charge, for had not the greatest of their philosophers time and again made the confession that man cannot by searching find out God? Plato himself had said, 'There is one excellent principle which we must acknowledge—that of the gods we know nothing, either of their natures, or of the names which they give themselves.'[1] Is not substantially the same confession made among ourselves to-day? What word is more current in philosophic and scientific circles than the term 'agnostic,' and what does it signify but the old confession that of the nature of God we know nothing? The modern world has vastly increased its apparatus for interpreting the works of God and inquiring into the inmost meaning of things, but in the last resort it has to confess itself baffled, for the deepest secret of all eludes its search. And so it is as true of the twentieth century as it was of the first that 'the world by wisdom knew not God.'

The preacher of the gospel is entitled to press this home upon his critics. You despise the message of the Cross, you refuse to take it seriously as a revelation of God and of the way of life; tell us then, Where else is the true light to be found? Show us the world's best wisdom. Bring together all the great philosophers and teachers of whom you boast, and let them give their testimony. It will be found that, except in so far as they have received the light that is in Christ, they cannot speak with any assurance about God. So, then, there is really no alternative to Christ. His gospel holds the field. We find ourselves driven back to it like Peter, who, when the multitudes were forsaking Jesus and he was challenged with the question, 'Will ye also go away,' made reply, 'Lord, to whom can we go but unto Thee, Thou hast the words of eternal life' (Jn. vi. 68). In all these twenty centuries nobody has arisen bold enough to answer Peter's question. Nothing has appeared to supersede the gospel, and contempt for the preaching of the gospel ill becomes those who have nothing better to offer. Very different was the spirit of Plato and of his great master Socrates, who in his last hours described all the best of human arguments as no better than a raft to which one must needs trust and make in peril the voyage of life, 'unless,' he added as a great hope flashed across his mind, 'unless it were possible to make the voyage more securely on some firmer vessel, even some divine word.'[1] There you see the world's best wisdom, standing on the loftiest summit of its own achievement, and pointing beyond itself. There you see it soothing its own sense of failure by a higher hope.

2. St Paul goes on to say that where the world's wisdom failed, the foolishness (so called) of preaching has proved effective. 'It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' The Apostle had proved that in his own experience. He was a university graduate who had profited above many of his equals, an honours man as we should say. At Tarsus and at Jerusalem he had learned all that the wisest both of Greeks and of Jews could teach, but he never found God and the way of salvation till he met Christ on the road to Damascus. And as he went through all lands preaching the gospel he found it an effective instrument for saving men. Writing to these Corinthian Christians he runs over a dreadful catalogue of thieves and drunkards and evil livers, adding, 'And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God' (1 Cor. vi. 11). What master of the world's wisdom could show such fruits as these?

Throughout all the ages of the Christian era the preaching of the gospel has produced the same results. Instances without number could be given, as surely every one must know. The effectiveness of preaching cannot be questioned. It has restored the erring, lifted the fallen and rescued those that were sunk in sin. In a mining village in Fifeshire a little band of workers were singing the gospel in the words of a simple hymn.

[1] J. S. Carroll, *The Motherhood of God*, 167.

[1] Plato, *Phædo*.

Lay thy weary burden down,
Down at Jesus' feet,

just the kind of hymn that would be despised as silly rant, but, as God would have it, these simple words pierced like heaven's own arrow into the soul of the lowest creature in the village, and there and then he laid his burden down and entered into peace.

The preachers of the Cross have gone into all the dark places of the earth and proved the effectiveness of their message under all conditions. The plantation slave, the cannibal of the South Seas, the dark-souled African have all borne witness to its power. And ever it has been the story of the Cross itself that has done the work. When the Moravian missionaries first went to Greenland they found a people so degraded that they thought in their inexperience it would be necessary to begin with teaching some moral truths which might lead up to the sublimer doctrines of the gospel. It proved wholly ineffective, but when the story of Gethsemane was told, then at length Kajarnak started forward with the eager question, 'What is that? Tell me that again,' and from that hour, as the historian of the Mission tells, 'the Rose of Sharon began to bloom in the eternal snows.' [1]

But for the 'foolishness of preaching' this land of ours, and indeed the whole wide world would have been a very different place. It can hardly be denied that it has proved the most powerful agent of civilization the world has ever known. 'Who is there, who, if told that some community of cannibals had taken to the Bible, that they were listening in crowds to its message, that they were fervently singing its psalms and hymns, and that their children had learnt to revere the name of Jesus—who would not expect with the firmest assurance to hear next that they were abandoning their ferocious habits, building houses, clothing themselves with decent apparel, cultivating their fields, beginning to trade, enacting righteous laws, and observing the rules of truth and righteousness?' [2] All which things very amply confirm the statement in the Shorter Catechism that 'the Spirit of God maketh the reading, *but especially the preaching* of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.' [1] 'Si monumentum requiris, circumspice'—if you require evidence of the power of preaching, look around you. History has set to her seal in confirmation of the truth.

[1] C. H. Robinson, *History of Christian Missions*, 52.
[2] Blackie, *Vitality of the Bible*, 39.

III

THE SECRET OF ITS POWER

Now, if one inquire as to the secret of this power which is manifest in the preaching of the gospel, perhaps the best reply is to say that it is God's word. 'Preaching is not merely as between man and man, but it is between God and man.' [2] Confucius says that 'without knowing the force of words it is impossible to know men,' for among men words have an amazing power. How much greater power must be in the Word of God, which is irresistible and creative. It is a hammer which breaks the rock in pieces, a fire which burns in a man's bones, a sword which pierces to the dividing asunder of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It is spirit and life to them that hear.

Being thus divine, it searches a man's soul and touches the inmost springs of his being. Man is not simply intellect to be converted by argument, a logic machine to be saved by a syllogism. In the fourteenth century Raymund Lull set out to convert the Mohammedans by demonstrating to them the absolute truth of Christianity, believing that nobody could possibly resist the force of argument, but, devoted man though he was, we hear no record of his conversions. No, if a man is to be saved you must get at the heart and will and conscience of him. It is just here that philosophy fails. The Greeks said, 'Sin is ignorance, and the sinner only needs enlightenment.' But enlightenment proved ineffective. You may indeed coldly prove that sin is unwise and imprudent, but you will never regenerate a soul by such means. There is a mightier obstacle to be overcome, that 'something in us that objects to God,' as Principal Rainy called it. You must touch the heart and conscience, for, as the poet Burns has most truly said, 'The hert's aye the pairt aye, that mak's us richt or

[1] *Question* 89.
[2] D. T. Young, *The Crimson Book*, 186.

wrang.' Here, above all, is where the preaching of the gospel proves its power. It plants the Cross full in view and bids the sinner halt as he goes on his evil way, and look at Him who hangs thereon. It is a vision of divine redeeming love which is able to make an impress on the hardest heart, and many a sinner who had broken through all other restraint has found it impossible to go to hell past Calvary. Suffering love lays upon the human heart a strange constraint. It is told of Thackeray that, walking out the Dean road to the west of Edinburgh, and seeing the wooden crane of a quarry standing out, as if etched upon the sky, and so placed as to assume the figure of a cross, he and his three companions gazed at it silently. 'As they gazed, Thackeray gave utterance, in a tremulous, gentle, and rapid voice, to what they all were feeling, in the word "Calvary." All that evening he was very gentle and serious, speaking, as he seldom did, of divine things—of death, of sin, of eternity, of salvation—expressing his simple faith in God and in his Saviour.' [1]

It is when heart and conscience are deeply touched that the stubborn will is subdued, that faith and hope and love awake, and there is an upspringing of new life within. Bernard Shaw in one of his plays [2] tells how the touch of a baby's hand made a hardened horse-thief 'go soft.' There is some such tender touch in the preaching of the gospel. Its very simplicity, which makes it appear to many to be childish, is the very hall-mark of its divinity and the measure of its power. 'It is clearly necessary,' says Ruskin,[3] 'from the beginning to the end of time, that God's way of revealing Himself to His creatures should be a simple way, which all His creatures may understand.' Man, one might say, is after all but as a little child lost in a trackless forest. To him comes the philosopher saying, 'I also am lost, but I know something of geography, something of latitudes and longitudes, and I trust we shall in time find our way out.' But the preacher of the gospel comes as a messenger from the Father's house, saying, 'Come, and I will show you the way home.' He may know little of the general lie of the land, and the ultimate constitution of things, but if he can point the way home to God his message will prevail to the saving of the soul.

[1] W. M. Clow, *Christ in Christian Experience*, 202.
[2] *The Shewing up of Blanco Posnet.*
[3] *Modern Painters.*

IV

FAITH IN PREACHING

All these considerations, surely, tend to confirm our faith in the preaching of the gospel. We have as good reason as St Paul had to glory in it. 'We must keep the preacher to the front. We must enforce the divinely-appointed channel of the divinely-ordained "foolishness."' [1]

(*a*) *Let the preacher preach* in full assurance. Let no note of unreality creep in to take the life out of it. 'Why is it,' said a clergyman to David Garrick, 'that you draw the multitude, while I preach to empty pews?' 'Because,' replied the actor, 'I set forth fiction as if it were true, while you preach the truth as if it were fiction.' [2] The greatest of God's prophets and preachers have been at times discouraged, feeling the futility of all their work, and doubtless there come seasons in every preacher's experience when the weekly sermon seems a foolish undertaking like David's idea of killing Goliath with a little pebble, yet must the message be sounded forth in the full assurance that God will wing it home.

(*b*) *Let the hearer hearken* with an honest and open mind. If it be a solemn responsibility to preach the gospel it is no less solemn a responsibility to hear it. How frequently does our Lord warn His hearers of this saying, 'He that hath ears to hear let him hear,' and 'Take heed how ye hear.' St Paul commends the Thessalonians because when they heard his preaching they 'received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God,' and surely this is how all true preaching should be received. The speech may be halting and the manner uncouth, but there is a treasure in the earthen vessel. Beware lest, in your folly, you fling it away.

(*c*) *Let the believer pray* that the word of the preacher may be blessed. It is told of a famous preacher of bygone days, whose sermons converted men by scores, that it was revealed to him that not one of the conversions was due to his eloquence but all to the prayers of an

[1] D. T. Young, *The Crimson Book*, 186.
[2] D. J. Burrell, *The Morning Cometh*, 57.

illiterate hearer who sat on the steps of the pulpit praying all the time for the success of the sermon.[1] Doubtless it must often be so, however little we may be able to discern it. St Paul believed that all who prayed for him preached with him, and he repeatedly besought the assistance of his hearers' prayers. Only the Searcher of hearts may tell what the preacher's word, sped by the prayers of a believing people, may accomplish in the salvation of men.

—O ! many a shaft, at random sent,
Finds mark the archer little meant !
And many a word, at random spoken,
May soothe or wound a heart that's broken ! [2]

If that be so, as we know it is, may we not firmly rest on the promise of Him who says, 'My word shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it' (Is. lv. 11).

J. H. Morrison.

Christ Crucified

1 Cor. i. 22-24.—'For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.'

Humanity is compelled to halt before the Cross of Christ; it is the most arresting spectacle in history. It represents the greatest revolution in values which the world can provide. The seal of failure, it has been adopted as the sign of victory. 'The unhappy wood,' as the Romans called it, has taken root as the Tree of Life.

What brought about this transformation? Some will answer—martyrdom. Christ was persecuted for righteousness' sake; He suffered on behalf of the truth; He died too soon because He was born too soon. But the moment that the Cross is made mere martyrdom it sinks to something less. The agony was not so awful as that devised to torture the truth from many of His followers. The agony in the garden reveals a shrinking from the trial which either detracts from the heroism of the hour or remains a baffling mystery. Martyrdom cannot give the Cross the place it has taken in history.

Some will say its tragedy. The execution of Jesus was a great mistake. The Jews put Jesus to death because they failed to understand their own Scriptures, because He more than fulfilled them, exceeded their expectations. Mistaking His intentions, the priests and elders of the people were moved with envy, when His ambition was only for the lowest place, His design not to win power or fame, but only the love of the worthless and fallen. It was ignorance, misconception, false fear that hounded Him to death. And life is full of such tragedy. But is it as a sign of the essential tragedy of existence that the Cross has won its way to universal recognition? Do we plant our graves with crosses as a confession that life has no meaning?

We have certainly missed the New Testament motive in these interpretations. It was not as a martyrdom or a tragedy that the story was first written down. It was not because the pathos and tragedy of the Cross made fine literature, but because it contained a gospel and constituted a revelation of God.

¶ Mr A. S. M. Hutchinson, in his latest novel,[1] tells us how his hero was impressed by something that an old furniture-maker said to him: 'An astounding (astounding in the simplicity and the unexpectedness of its utterance) thing dropped from Old Yeoman when, setting him to work upon that table, he had essayed to explain to him the theory of his designs in furniture. "Trying to express myself, to express an idea," he had said to that blind old man, "in wood, Yeoman. Artists express themselves in colours, in words, in stone; well, I don't see why a man can't express himself in wood." Old Yeoman's reply: "In wood? It hath been done, sir; ay, mightiest expression of a man ever the world knew hath been in wood." "What, Yeoman?" he had asked. And the astounding answer: "Sir, the Cross of Christ."'

1. The Cross is a paradoxical answer to the world's aspirations.

(1) The dual classification of Jews and Greeks sums up the world's demand for assurance. The Jews in their demand for a sign repre-

[1] *The Spirit of Father Faber*, 95.
[2] Scott, *Lord of the Isles*, v. 18.

[1] *One Increasing Purpose*, 203.

sent the pragmatic demand of mankind. The Semites are not the idealists of humanity. They rather represent the practical mind. This comes out in their national development. They have become pre-eminently the commercial race, with a very keen appreciation of what makes the world go round. And this is not at all inconsistent with their character revealed in Scripture. Their Messianic predictions ever abounded with hopes of the destruction of material evils and the bringing in of conditions of stability, security, and prosperity. It was not mere hunger for marvels which moved the Jews to meet Christ's claims with the demand for a sign. They wanted to see this power of the Kingdom actually at work. What could it accomplish? What did it propose to do? Jesus was crucified partly because people were disappointed in Him.

The Greeks, on the other hand, represent the philosophic demand of mankind. Their restless, probing mind was never content until everything was defined, embraced in one simple scheme, and all effects traced back to their ultimate cause. They therefore distrusted everything which could not give a rational account of itself. Plato represents the endeavour to trace everything back to the Idea of the Absolute Mind from which the whole of existence could be developed by the mere process of thinking. Aristotle stands for the all-inclusive scheme into which everything must fit and so constitute a perfect whole. And for all these processes wisdom was demanded, a power of intellectual analysis, a capacity for not being taken in by appearances, or swamped by emotion.

(2) Paul knows he offends all this with his message of the Cross. Whatever might be said about the truth of Christ's teaching, the beauty of His ideal, the power of His personality, one thing was clear, namely, that He had absolutely failed. He had not been able to convince men of the truth, His ideals had not won sufficient support to carry them to success, and His personality had not sufficed to rally anyone to His side at the last, or so impressed His captors, judges, and executioners that they feared to lay upon Him impious hands.

To the Greeks a crucified Redeemer was an absurdity. The parading of this sordid story and proclamation of this unpleasant death was an outrage on all finer sensibilities. It offended their sense of beauty. Jesus was dismissed by a man like Lucian as 'a gibbeted sophist,' and the drawing of a crucified ass on the walls of the Palatine is a characteristically Greek attitude towards the Cross. Above all, what rational meaning could the Crucifixion have? None of the doctrines of the Cross—that it represented the redemptive, suffering God, or the bearing of the sin of the world, or the substitute for punitive vengeance—offered the slightest relief. Three ideas of God the Greeks could understand: the impassive Zeus who was beyond caring about either human sorrows or joys; the radiant Apollo of almost feminine beauty; Æsculapius, a saviour indeed, but one who healed by Nature's medicine. If Christ was to be taken in any way as an ambassador, a picture, or an Incarnation of God, it meant carrying impotence, failure, tragedy into the very heart and origin of things—and this was unthinkable and intolerable.

¶ The great and glorious doctrine of the Cross, that which was a stumbling-block to the Jew and folly to the Greek, is both to the Chinese. They see the outward transaction, but cannot penetrate into the depths of its meaning. They behold its shame, but are blind to its glory. A Chinese Muhammadan, after listening to the exposition of the truth for a time, called upon Mr Muirhead and said, 'Teacher, your doctrine is very good, but I beg to advise you in regard to this point. If you go about preaching that Jesus is the Son of God, multitudes will believe you, but you must withhold all reference to Him having died on the Cross. That, in the view of the Chinese, is ignominious, and altogether an unworthy matter to be talked of.'

He was told that this was the cardinal truth we have to preach, and that apart from it our doctrine had no meaning; 'but,' said he, 'speak of His teaching and miracles, and the people will be sufficiently interested.' Then he was directed to read the first chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and he acknowledged that the doctrine of the Cross was an inseparable and main element of Christianity.[1]

2. The Cross is the revelation of the Divine wisdom and power.

(1) It is difficult to trace how this came to be

[1] R. W. Thompson, *Griffith John*, 60.

discerned. It is not due to the fact or faith that the shame of the Cross had been wiped out by the succeeding glory of the Resurrection. The spiritual glory and Divine power of the Crucified had been borne into men's hearts before the Resurrection. Two men who saw the Crucifixion close at hand saw the Sufferer suddenly radiant with Kingship and Divine glory, namely, the penitent thief crucified by His side, and the centurion on duty at the execution. It is a similar thing which happened to St Paul. The vision on the Damascus road was no mere irruption of the supernatural. Its moral content is displayed in Paul's own account of what happened. After long concern over the disgrace and degradation of the Cross, the personality of the Crucified suddenly bore in on every faculty at once, moral, physical, and spiritual. And it is this touch of a living and glorious personality on the soul which is being repeated in religious experience down to this very day.

There are things which prepare for it, of course. There is the moral re-valuation of an outward act of failure as we watch the spirit of Christ facing the final issues, and discern that it is a great affirmation of the soul in the supremacy of the spiritual. It is the world which is shown as crucified before the challenge of the Cross. History, with its record of man's restless search for power, his attempt to establish a kingdom of righteousness by force and stay the powers of evil by the sword, is seen in one illuminated glance to lie in ruins, futile and meaningless; while the Cross stands firm as the only way to an everlasting dominion over man's else unsatisfied loyalties.

¶ In the Hotel des Invalides in Paris the tomb of Napoleon is housed in a domed rotunda, the windows of which are stippled with blue, so that the very light is dolorous as of departed glory and twilight ideals. The sarcophagus of the great soldier lies facing a small chancel leading out from beneath the dome, and this is lighted with windows coloured with yellow, so that it seems to be bathed in sunshine. And there on the altar is a crucifix with rays of gold, as if the lesson intended was that this man died in gloom and that Man in glory.

The intuition of something even more is not to be explained away as due to mere doctrine. That the Sinless was there bearing our sin is a deduction from the sudden heart's ease which comes to those who have knelt at the Cross in earnest prayer and burdened misery. But it is not a mere guess or emotional gloss. Christ had to go to the Cross because men were self-seeking, blind, concerned for what was expedient, and all the more swiftly because of His own innocence, purity, and unclouded conscience.

There is something terribly offensive to man in the appearance of this sinless phenomenon, waking as it does an awful witness within against ourselves. True is it also that Christ did not only have the consequences of sin thrust upon Him; He deliberately assumed the burden of sin as if it were His own, groaned for its weight, wept for its blindness, prayed for its ignorance.

It may seem more precious still to take the final step and say with Paul that God was in Christ in His reconciling work, sharing His sorrows, feeling all that He felt. We might come to this by an inevitable conclusion from the Divine Immanence; but it is demanded still more by the fact that Christ's sufferings evidently surpass anything which human consciousness can comprehend. That the Father suffered in the Son was once condemned as a heresy, but it is the one thing that gives us a line to sound the depths of Christ's passion. It is only as one reaches this that one is in a position to appreciate to the full this declaration, that Christ crucified was the power and the wisdom of God.

(2) The description of Christ crucified as the power and wisdom of God implies more than might be at first noticed. It is startling to find these attributes of the Godhead singled out as revealed in the Crucifixion. It has more often been assumed that the Cross revealed only the love and the mercy of God. Paul maintains, on the contrary, that what was set forth in the Cross was precisely the power of God and the wisdom of God. It is by the Cross, rather than by some demonstration of might, that the quality of the Divine omnipotence was revealed, and by this method that the character of God's omniscience was declared. What, therefore, the Cross does is to reveal the entire misinterpretation of God under which men still labour, and the baseless futility of what they worship as power and wisdom. It dismisses man's trust in might as misplaced, and his estimate of worldly wisdom as empty intellectual snobbery. If Christ crucified is the power and wisdom of God, our ideas of God are shown to be inade-

quate, and our conceptions of wisdom and power are shown to be fallacious.

But only when we take the words more seriously is their outstanding significance made clear. If we can conceive that in Christ and in the Cross God Himself was setting a new way before the world, that God was in Christ personally, and the Cross was a Divine experience as well as a Divine expression, then the revolution of thought is tremendous. Suppose that to save the world God entered human life, lived as a fully human being, under all our essentially human conditions of limited outlook, in order to manifest the wisdom that does not wait on learning, and, in order to break the power of evil, yielded Himself into the hands of His enemies to show us how to overthrow all unrighteousness.

There are many who say that this is an impossible conception. God could not have the experience of a human creature or dispossess Himself of His Divine omniscience. But what if the only ultimate power there is be not this might and force to which the evil man trusts to further his evil and the good man to protect his good? Suppose love is the ultimate reality of Godhead, the power that rules the sun and all the stars and the final anchor of all goodness, then only in a human experience can God be truly expressed, and only in His willingness to endure the Cross can God fulfil Himself.

The Cross Thy Power

1 Cor. i. 23.—'We preach Christ crucified.'

We read that there was darkness round about the Cross while Jesus was dying. Surely there is meaning in that. It means that there was about the agony of the Son of Man a great silence and mystery. It signifies certainly this, that the meaning of it all was never to be understood by idle passers-by, or by those who were content to remain at a distance. It means that only they who were very near the Cross, and who themselves were looking up out of their own breaking heart, should ever see the face of Christ, and hear those words which broke from His Agony.

¶ 'It was wrought in darkness,' said C. H. Spurgeon, 'because its full meaning could not be beheld of finite mind.'

The Cross is still shrouded, not indeed in darkness, but by the mystery which encircles it. It would seem as though God intended to keep down mere human presumptuousness concerning the true necessity for the Passion of His Holy Son. The Cross of Christ is a place where God intends the darkness to bring a hush over the human spirit. It is a place not for seeing but for believing; it is a place not for discussion but for prayer. It is a place not for speaking but for listening; for listening to the things which we ourselves are aware of as often as we are quite alone—that is to say, alone with God.

Let us once more recall to our minds one or two meanings which stand out clearly from the great mystery of our Lord's Passion.

1. The simplest meaning which the Cross of Christ has for us is that there we have the perfect example of obedience to the will of God. In the sufferings of Jesus, in the increasing loneliness of His life, in the cruelties at the hands of men which He endured, and in the ignominious death which the world imposed upon Him—in all this, we have an illustration of the trials and pains which are apt to fall upon the man who brings to his day and generation a vision of holiness and love which rebukes the reigning temper of the time. We are warned, so that we may be prepared for it, that the path of personal fidelity to God is no easy road, but one on which it is more than likely we shall meet the opposition and torment of the world. The Cross, from this point of view, is Christ's way of disheartening us if we will be disheartened. But if we will not be disheartened, if we will not be frightened out of our holy resolutions by any prospect of discomfort or pain, then the Cross from being a challenge to us becomes a power within us. Any trial in this life of ours which does not break us down, adds to our moral strength. Every Cross that we are *not* afraid of, bestows upon us an access of power. This is the meaning of the New Testament phrase—'that the Cross becomes the *power* of God' to those who believe, to those who are not afraid.

2. This leads us on to the second insight into the meaning of the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have said that it is the perfect example and illustration of the spirit and the

sufferings of a holy and obedient will. But an example is always more than an example. An example is also a power. And so we say 'example is better than precept.' Why is example better than precept? Why is it a surer way of influencing another, to show him the way than merely to tell him the way? The reason is this. An example is a living contagious thing, which emits power.

You know that you cannot draw near to a good man, you cannot even recall him to your mind, without feeling him helping you. Something seems to come out from him and to take possession of you. His strength comes to the rescue of your weakness, so that, so long as he is near you, he is with you, he is even in you, as a Power enabling you to achieve the very thing which he had awakened as an ambition in your spirit. And this is true, though it is short of the whole truth, of the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Cross of Christ cannot be for one moment a mere example or illustration without in that very moment becoming more than an example. It becomes a power, a reinforcement, a summons. It lets loose some Divine Power upon us, and it awakens some Divine Power within us.

That may be the meaning of that other New Testament phrase applied to the Cross of Christ, namely, that it is 'the wisdom of God.' Men naturally suppose that the way to get people to do things is to bribe them to do them. They will do what is easy, what is pleasant, what suits them. They will do anything which ministers to their pride or to their interest. Such is the wisdom of the world. But what is the wisdom of God? Just the very opposite of that. 'The Cross' is the wisdom of God. It is the amazing insight of God into the human heart, an insight which Christ accepted and made the basis of His own lonely achievement for our salvation—that the appeal which finally would win man was not the appeal to his love of ease, but to his love of hardness; not to his self-interest, but to his self-sacrifice; that at the last God would be able to find men, to appeal to them, to get them, not by setting before them an easy way, but by setting before them a hard way, even such a way as led through Gethsemane to the Cross of Calvary and the apparent contradiction of every hope, the apparent blotting out of every light.

¶ He could on occasion, when dealing with individuals, be very surprising. When a priest came to him miserable and out of heart about his work, Frank only remarked: 'How do you know God does not mean you to be a failure?' It sounded unsympathetic, but the man to whom he spoke went away braced up to face his difficulties without complaining. He asked another priest, while in England, to join the Mission, but the man excused himself, saying, 'I don't think I could live in Africa.' 'I didn't ask you to live,' said Frank. 'You can glorify God by your death.'[1]

Jesus, whose lot with us was cast,
Who saw it out from first to last . . .
Would I could win and keep and feel
That heart of love, that spirit of steel.
I would not to your bosom fly
To slink off till the storms go by;
If you are like the Man you were,
You'd turn in scorn from such a prayer . . .
Flog me and spur me, set me straight
At some vile job I fear and hate;
Some sickening round of long endeavour,
No light, no rest, no outlet ever;
All at a pace that must not slack,
Though heart would burst and sinews crack . . .
Do you but keep me, hope or none,
Cheery and staunch till all is done,
And, at the last gasp, quick to lend
One effort more to serve a friend.

There is a time to shelter in Christ's arms; yet in these rugged lines, found in the pocket of a dead New Zealander upon Gallipoli, there is something which may too often be left out of the lazy and selfish interpretation men give to Christianity and life. There is something in their deepest selves, would they but stir it up, which answers the call of the sacrificial.[2]

We are all of us, each in our own way, seeking happiness. And we are right in seeking happiness. We cannot conceive God otherwise than as wishing us to be happy. But the happiness of any creature always depends upon the nature of that creature. The nature of man is this: he is made to live in obedience to voices which come to him from the holiest crisis of history, and from the holiest moment of his own life. And such being his nature, man is at peace only in the fulfilment of it. A

[1] H. M. Smith, *Frank, Bishop of Zanzibar*, 69.
[2] J. M. E. Ross, *The Tree of Healing*, 127.

man is himself, a man has come to the knowledge of himself, who in the course of his journey through this world has met right in the middle of his way the Cross of the Son of Man—that Cross on which God and man find one another. We have come to ourselves and have entered definitely upon the saving Way, when, at the vision of the Son of Man in sacrifice, the Holy Spirit is let loose upon us and a spirit rises up from the depths of our soul to meet it. 'For this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.'

The Duty of Mental Sympathy

1 Cor. i. 23.—'Unto the Greeks foolishness.'

THE Greeks evidently laughed at Christianity; and without much right. It is only a very great people that can afford to laugh at the ideas of another people; and a very great people will be chary of doing it. Perhaps if any nation had a right to smile at the guesses at truth of the surrounding nations, it was the Greece of an earlier day. But the Greeks of Paul's time—and especially of Corinth, a kind of Parisian Brighton of those days—were unworthy sons of worthy sires; and their laughter was of no account, except to themselves. But to themselves it mattered considerably, for it proved them possessors of the folly they derided.

Our text suggests for our consideration some of the types of mind which find in the earnestly-held ideas of other men, food, not for reflection, but for derision, and the duty that is laid upon us to develop a mental sympathy with ideas other than our own.

1. In the first place, we may note that we tend to deride ideas which are opposed to our own, because we have no experience of the type of life which gives rise to them. Our instinct is to cleave to the views on life which we inherit, or which we imbibe from the atmosphere in which we habitually move. That is inevitable; and, however much we may say that it is desirable that we should overcome our parochialism, it is absurd to expect us to be very successful in the endeavour. 'Why are we what we are,' we are often asked, 'in ecclesiastical or political preference'? If we answer, 'because we were born so,' we are making a not unreasonable reply. At any rate, if we have not found a good reason, we have hit upon a remarkably good excuse.

¶ Dean Stanley tells his friend Lake of an acquaintance among the freshmen at Oxford: 'A good type of his class apparently, who quotes the Articles as Scripture, the Church as infallible. I went out for a walk with him one day. Suddenly a look of horror appeared on his face. "I did not know that such a thing was tolerated in Oxford," he said, pointing to a notice on the wall. I imagined it to be something dreadful; it was an innocent *To the Chapel*. "Oh," said I, "you mean the Dissenting Chapel?" "Yes, how could it have been built here? I wonder they did not pull it down long ago."'[1]

But the matter is different when we are so secure in our own view of life, that we necessarily regard views held by earnest men different from our own, as, at the best, folly, and, at the worst, hypocrisy. For, all that that proves is that we have not sufficient imagination to perceive that they have had different experiences of life from our own; experiences which not only bring in their train a different scale of importances, but a different emotional attitude to things as a whole. For instance, most of us, many of us at any rate, have had experience of the life of the poor, either directly or indirectly. That brings with it a certain scale of importances, for work both in Church and State; and brings with it also a certain emotional attitude to things in general, which involves a certain anger with a world in which poverty remains. But few of us have had any experience of either government or administration; and it is difficult, indeed all but impossible, for us to realize the importance laid by one, who has had such experience, on the security and stability of the State, or to enter into the emotional attitude which such an one takes when he fears that either the security or the stability is threatened.

Now, when the fact is that equally honest men are constantly differing on every conceivable question—from affairs of a hemisphere to the affairs of an academic debating society—on questions religious, social, ecclesiastical, artistic, scientific—it is manifestly disastrous that an atmosphere should not be created in which calm judgments can be formed on sheer argument. This can never be, while the circles

[1] J. Burns.

of the opponents' thoughts are untouching. Consequently, if we are to be useful servants of society, our first endeavour should be to develop the faculty of entering into the thoughts of those with whom we differ.

¶ Dods was the best friend and the most Christlike man I have ever known. There was a generous incredulity at his heart. He was slow to wrath, and especially very slow to believe anything against those whom he cared for. He was not only willing, but even anxious to hear the other side in every controversy, even when his own mind had been resolutely made up. 'Wait till you are seventy,' he would say with that unforgettable smile.[1]

But this is a rare faculty, to be purchased dearly. Literature helps us to obtain it. Classical literature helps. Travel helps. Determination helps. And, the Spirit of God helps. The sympathy of Christ invades not only the heart but the mind. And if won, it is a faculty most helpful to the State. There seems to be amongst us a separation between class and class. If so, God send us all God-touched imaginations. God touch the imaginations of the rich; and of the poor, no less. Let the rich man enter into the anxiety of the poor man; let my lady enter into the feelings of a woman whose husband is out of work. Let a poor man, kept from evil because he cannot pay for it, reflect on where he would be if he had £10,000 a year. Let us, in this great imaginative sense, 'bear one another's burdens.' Then, maybe, in Church and State we shall be more likely to fulfil the law of Christ.

¶ When we covet earnestly the best gifts it is worth while to remember George Fox's wonderful prayer: 'I have prayed to be baptized into a sense of all conditions, that I might be able to know the needs and feel the sorrows of all.' There are men and women in these troubled days who possess no such serene convictions and celestial messages as were granted to the founder of the Society of Friends; yet they have begun at least to feel for all sorts and conditions of men.[2]

2. In the second place, we run a danger of unworthy deriding by being too intellectual. We first of all see that there is something to be said for everything. The risk is that we come to think that there is nothing conclusive to be said about anything, and so develop into intellectual Tompkinsons, hung for ever between two opinions. A most insidious position, this. A very dangerous and comfortable position: for it pleases a man's pride. What is more satisfying to the natural man than to laugh impartially at all parties and opinions, and to include the whole world, except himself and one or two cronies, in a large and generous contempt?

¶ I hate intolerance. That unkind want of sympathy with earnest investigators of truth, that policeman-like quickness at catching the first trip, seems to me one of the worst evils we have now to fight. And it can only be fought by a fixed faith of one's own, and a gentle loving life. Intolerance, so far from being extinguished, is actually fed, by a dilettante indifference.[1]

The first necessity is that we should realize that the world is a place for *action*. Opinions have to be formed often simply because something has to be done. Anything that forces us into opinion, by forcing us into action, is good for us.

In these regions there are certain ways in which we must proceed.

(1) When we have a strong inner conviction as to the right we must act on it; while, at the same time, we endeavour, if need be, to correct our conviction by mental development and spiritual growth.

(2) We must come to believe in our reason. That is to say, when we argue out a position and come to a conclusion, we must have faith enough to proceed to action accordingly. That others disagree is no reason for believing ourselves wrong. It is a reason for considering any new argument. But if, having reasoned the matter out, we refuse to act, that is really to deny the basis for all action except such as humanity is agreed upon.

(3) We must cultivate the faculty of running a risk, acknowledging it to be a risk. 'It seems to us that we have points enough worth fighting for.' That is the right spirit in a perplexing situation. The world progresses more by men who can act, though wrongly, than by men who are so afraid to be wrong that they never act rightly.

Considerations of this kind apply greatly to religion. Men frequently find it 'foolishness'—

[1] W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Seen and the Unseen*, 12.
[2] T. H. Darlow, *Via Sacra*, 105.

[1] J. R. M. Butler, *Henry Montagu Butler*, 230.

especially Christianity. They find it without learning and they despise it; or remain permanently hung up between acknowledgment and rejection. Be prepared to believe that humble folk can reach the truth, by which the lofty and the lowly alike worthily live. And if Christ strike home, do not care how clever others are. You know whom you have believed. It may seem the more 'intelligent' to hesitate between two opinions. But is it not nobler to take the risk of venturing life on Christ's terms? Yes, it is nobler and wiser. For thus men taste and see how gracious the Lord is.

The Foolishness of God

1 Cor. i. 25.—'The foolishness of God is wiser than men.'

It is impossible to give to this bold and striking saying any definite meaning, until we read it in the light of the whole passage in which it occurs. In the eighteenth verse St Paul had said, 'The word of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness'; and in the twenty-third he says that to the Greeks Christ crucified was 'foolishness.' His reply is that at all events it is the foolishness of God, whose foolishness is wiser than men—than the Greeks in particular.

For if there ever existed a people that might reasonably claim to possess wisdom, it was that marvellous little Greek nation. To this day the Greeks are our masters in philosophy—the masters of all Christendom. There is almost no subject that Plato, Aristotle, and the rest did not discuss with marvellous subtlety, adventurousness, and freedom of intellect: the world without and the world within; the nature of the gods; the laws of morality, of the human mind; the immortality of the soul; the final judgment of men; the principles of politics; the world beyond death—all were explored with a completeness which has made the philosophies of other nations little more than a commentary upon theirs.

And so to intellects filled with all the wisdom of which the natural mind is capable it must have seemed 'foolishness,' almost insanity, to say that a far diviner wisdom had appeared in the form of a crucified Man. Their art had brought the human form in marble to its highest possible beauty: to ask them to exchange that Divine loveliness which haunted their imaginations for the broken form of a crucified Man, must have seemed the wanderings of a disordered brain.

¶ Shorthouse, in his well-known book,[1] has familiarized us with the contrast between the Apollo and the Crucified. 'They were standing before the Apollo in the Belvidere gardens. Inglesant took from beneath his vest a crucifix in ivory, exquisitely carved, and held it beside the statue of the god. The one the noblest product of buoyant life, the proudest perfection of harmonious form, purified from all the dross of humanity, the head worthy of the god of day and of the lyre, of healing and of help; the other worn, and emaciated, helpless, dying, apparently without power, forgotten by the world.'

Nevertheless, St Paul was right—'the foolishness of God is wiser than men,' even at their wisest. Let us consider some of the directions in which Greek wisdom has failed to answer those deepest wants of human nature which have been answered by that foolishness of God, the Cross of Christ.

1. Take the knowledge of God which the wisdom of ancient Greece attained—not in its debased forms, but as conceived by the most spiritual mind of heathendom. Plato protests indignantly against the tales poets told of the gods, attributing to Divine beings the passions and low desires of fallen, sinful humanity. He declares that we must impute no evil to God, to whom he attributes the strictest justice, so that, if not here, at least elsewhere, every man will receive the due reward of his deeds. Like Euripides, he sees

> The secret road
> That bringeth justice ere the end be trod
> To all that breathes and dies.

It is much for Plato to have reached this high conception of God. Yet it omits entirely the whole range of the sympathetic virtues. There is in it no pity for human sin or sorrow—far less any passion of a self-sacrificing love. To the highest Greek wisdom the gods were beings careless of our sorrows, of our sins; incapable of being afflicted in our afflictions or sacrificing themselves to save us. Tennyson

[1] *John Inglesant*, ch. xxv.

well describes them by the mouth of the wise Roman Lucretius:

> The Gods, who haunt
> The lucid interspace of world and world,
> Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,
> Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,
> Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,
> Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar
> Their sacred everlasting calm!

No such conception of God was attained by any ancient Greek or modern philosopher as that revealed in the foolishness of the Cross.

¶ A God that could understand, that could suffer, that could sympathize, that had felt the extremity of human anguish, the agony of bereavement, had submitted even to the brutal hopeless torture of the innocent, and had become acquainted with the pangs of death—this has been the chief consolation of the Christian religion. This is the extraordinary conception of Godhead to which we have thus far risen.[1]

2. Consider next the Greek conception of sin. And once more, take it at its best, as we find it in Socrates. His favourite doctrine is that virtue is knowledge; vice, ignorance. No man sins except through lack of knowledge; enlighten the mind, and sin must disappear.

How curiously modern it sounds! We are often told that we must educate if we wish a better world. If only it were true! Doubtless knowledge and education do produce improvement. But Greece itself is proof of the impotence of knowledge alone to curb what even Socrates, with a glimpse of the truth, calls the 'wild-beast' passions of human nature. Knowledge in that land blossomed into the fairest flowers the world has ever seen of philosophy, poetry, sculpture: yet the nation sank into a state of vice which destroyed it.

Or look not at sin but at sinners. Did the wisdom of men devise any mode of saving them? Rather, the wisdom of the ancient world saw no reason why sinners should be saved at all. There is a famous controversy between Origen, a Christian Father of the third century, and Celsus, a heathen philosopher. Celsus, with very considerable power, attacks Christianity, which, to him, must be evil since it invites the worst of sinners. Other religions, he says, invite to their mysteries the good, 'making proclamation as follows: "Every one who has clean hands and a prudent tongue," or "He who is pure from all pollution, and whose soul is conscious of no evil, and who has lived justly." . . . But,' he continues, 'let us hear what kind of persons these Christians invite. Every one, they say, who is a sinner, who is devoid of understanding, who is a child, and, to speak generally, whoever is unfortunate, him will the Kingdom of God receive. Do you not call him a sinner, then, who is unjust, and a thief, and a housebreaker, and a poisoner, and a committer of sacrilege, and a robber of the dead? What others would a man invite if he were issuing a proclamation for an assembly of robbers?'

Origen's answer was easy and triumphant. He had only to point to thousands reclaimed from such vices to purity and duty. But the fact that a philosopher could utter such a taunt proved, first, that heathen wisdom had no true understanding of sin; next, that it had no sympathy with sinners; and, third, that it had no hope of their moral recovery.

Now, in all these matters, is it not the simple truth that 'the foolishness of God is wiser than men'? Sin is not to be cured by knowledge alone—it is to be cured by drawing forth our affections to 'Christ, and him crucified': 'If ye love me, ye will keep my words.' The very nature of sin has been taught to the world by the Cross of Christ, far more truly than by the moral philosophy of Plato and Aristotle and all their commentators to the present moment. And while the heathen world at its wisest despaired of any moral recovery of sinners, the Cross has proved itself, generation after generation, 'the power of God unto salvation,' a power which, in the souls of a great multitude which no man can number, has broken the tyranny of sin, opened the prison doors, led sinful men and women forth into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

3. Once more, the philosophy of the Greeks appealed only to an elect few. Even had it been able to give true ideas of God, and to deal effectively with the problem of sin, still it could have had no power over the mass of men, who have neither the leisure nor the intellect necessary for the subtle problems of philosophy.

But 'the foolishness of God is wiser than

[1] Sir Oliver Lodge.

men' just in this: that the Cross of Christ makes an appeal which is universal, dependent on no philosophical attainments or intellectual power, but touching the general heart of mankind. St Paul appeals to the Corinthians themselves in proof of this. They were nearly all poor men and women, slaves and artisans to whom poverty and hard work had denied the chance of intellectual training. If, then, the gospel were a philosophy which they had to master with their intellects, plainly it was not for them. But it was 'Jesus Christ, and him crucified,' and therefore they, 'the foolish things of the world,' were called into His fellowship.

The foolishness of God is so much wiser than men that it appeals to all men independently of any accidental thing, such as education. There is a noble passage in one of the Christian Fathers, Tertullian, in which he sweeps aside the pretensions of the culture of his day, and summons, as it were, the naked human soul: 'Stand forth, O soul . . . from whatever source . . . stand forth and give thy witness. But I call thee not, as when, fashioned in schools, trained in libraries, fed up in Attic academies and porticoes, thou pourest forth thy wisdom. I summon thee, simple and rude, uncultured and untaught, such as they have thee who have thee by thyself—that very thing in its pure integrity—from the road, the street, the workshop. I want thine *in*experience, since thy poor experience is trusted by none. I demand of thee the things thou bringest with thee into man, just what thoughts thou hast learnt either from thyself or from thy Creator.'

It is to this naked soul, the bare manhood which exists somewhere in all men beneath the incrustations of both education and want of education, that Christ crucified makes His universal appeal. Not that Christianity has no wisdom of its own. We must never imagine that our religion is opposed to education, is irrational at the core, or is an appeal to ignorance as such. It has a wisdom, a philosophy of its own. It has given a marvellous impetus to the mind of man. Yet it remains true that this Christianity is not something devised by the wit of man. Call it foolishness if you please; yet remember it is the 'foolishness of God which is wiser than men.'

The Power of Weakness

A Christmas Message

1 Cor. i. 27.—'God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.'

Of all the world's weak things, what is weaker than a new-born child? When Shakespeare strained his imagination to find a picture of weakness, that he might throw into relief the effect of a tragedy in making the weak strong, it was here that he found it. 'Pity, like a naked, new-born babe, striding the blast,' he wrote. But the force of the Christmas suggestion of the power of the weak lies not simply in the fact that Jesus, the strong Lord, was once the most helpless of the helpless. It lies in the fact that at the heart of the life-system which the Child born in the manger founded there ever remains a child.

Those to whom the words were first addressed had especial need of their comfort. If God was on the side of the little Christian Church, He was certainly on the side of the weak. Arrayed against Christianity, either in active opposition or in the almost worse opposition of sheer indifference and contempt, were all those who held the reins of power. Wherefore, we may see how bold was the prophecy that the Apostle made.

It still remains true that God chooses the weak things to confound the things that are mighty. Of course, the text is a paradox. That which God chooses is not weak. But the text holds strictly true in the region of our estimation. We have not yet rightly learned the Christmas message. We still estimate the mighty wrongly. It is still true that our weak things are God's strong ones. For wherein do we consider strength or world-power to consist? In the possessing of a position for the direct affecting of affairs. Therefore, birth into the ruling class, the possession of money, and, above all, the power to call on physical force to enforce views held according to our view, are the strong things of the world.

¶ A century ago men were following, with bated breath, the march of Napoleon, and waiting with feverish impatience for the latest news of the wars. And all the while, in their own homes, babies were being born. But who could think about *babies*? Everybody was thinking about *battles*. It was another case of

the historian and the hippopotamus. For let us look at some of those babies. Why, in one year, lying midway between Trafalgar and Waterloo, there stole into the world a host of heroes! During that one year, 1809, Mr Gladstone was born at Liverpool; Alfred Tennyson was born at the Somersby rectory; and Oliver Wendell Holmes made his first appearance at Massachusetts. On the very self-same day of that self-same year Charles Darwin made his début at Shrewsbury, and Abraham Lincoln drew his first breath at Old Kentucky. Music was enriched by the advent of Frederic Chopin at Warsaw, and of Felix Mendelssohn at Hamburg. Within the same year, too, Samuel Morley was born at Homerton, Edward FitzGerald at Woodbridge, Elizabeth Barrett Browning at Durham, and Francis Kemble in London.

We fancy that God can only manage His world by big battalions abroad, when all the while He is doing it by beautiful babies at home. When a wrong wants righting, or a work wants doing, or a truth wants preaching, or a continent wants opening, God sends a baby into the world to do it. That is why, long, long ago, a babe was born at Bethlehem.[1]

According to the world's estimate of power, we find a difficulty in the Christmas story. On the one hand there are Greece and Rome and the Jewish order; all the powers banded together. Against them stands one Jewish carpenter born in a manger, with peasant friends, who at the end of His life had almost no following, and for Himself had won only a Cross. A powerless, portionless, moneyless man. But yet, somehow, He has proved the supreme world-force, and has become such an one that kings have cast their crowns before His Cross.

¶ John Masefield, in a recent play, has given us a conversation between Longinus, a centurion, and Procula, the wife of Pilate. The latter has asked to hear the story of the Crucifixion, and at the end she turns to Longinus with the question: What do you think the man believed, centurion?

Longinus. He believed that he was God, they say.

Procula. What do you think of that claim?

Longinus. If a man believes anything up to the point of dying on the cross for it, he will find others to believe it.

[1] F. W. Boreham, *Mountains in the Mist*, 166.

Procula. Do you believe it?

Longinus. He was a fine young fellow, my lady, not past the middle age. And he was all alone and defied all the Jews and all the Romans, and, when we had done with him, he was a poor broken-down thing, dead on the cross.

Procula. Do you think he is dead?

Longinus. No, lady, I don't.

Procula. Then where is he?

Longinus. Let loose in the world, lady, where neither Roman nor Jew can stop his truth.[1]

So God chooses truth to confound the things that appear to be mighty. That thought contains the two suggestions, that the man of ideas stands behind the man of action, and that the man whose ideas are true is the man of real force. The former of these propositions is easy enough to substantiate. The discoverer of anæsthetics stands behind the operating surgeon; the pure physicist stands behind the bridge-builder; and the ethical philosopher and political economist stand behind the Governor of a province. Hence is manifest the splendour of a life of research. The man who gives himself to such a life is clearly the power behind the throne.

The latter proposition, that the man whose ideas are true is the man of real force, is harder to substantiate; and yet history supports it. Take, for example, the gradual acceptance of scientific truth, although all the forces of obscurantism were arrayed against it: and of political truth in respect of slavery, despite the vested interests that opposed freedom. The fact is, that man cannot abide in error for ever, because the results in practice are so disastrous. Moreover, he has, after all, a kind of truth-receptiveness. Gradually, that which *is* gets hold of him.

> Truth, crush'd to earth, shall rise again,
> The eternal years of God are hers:
> While Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
> And dies amid his worshippers.

While truth thus wins its way, still, when it first appears, it looks so terribly weak. What is an idea as against big battalions? What is a principle against a crown? The truth of Jesus looked weak and very forlorn when He proclaimed it. But it was the truth. And

[1] *The Trial of Jesus*, 95.

behold what it has wrought! Yes, God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty.

The Christian is called by the man of the world a visionary and a dreamer and a fool. Why? Because his life-method shuts out from him many life-satisfactions, which a neglecter of principle and a selfish man can obtain. A man who is not trammelled by the principles of Jesus may, and very often does, obtain slices of this world's goods, and even a direct influence upon affairs, which a follower of Christ does not. Nevertheless, even here, the weak things confound the mighty; for Christ's man gets what the other never gets, although he wants it, and that is peace. The Christless life-plan may bring a man some of the purple things of life; though even here it fails in the end. It brought Cæsar a stab in the back and Napoleon to St Helena. But the heart in harmony it never brings. And for this very good reason, that the Christian life-plan is the true one, in the sense of being the will of God concerning men. In willing to follow Christ, we are willing the will of God for us after Him.

> In His will is our peace. To this all things
> By Him created, or by Nature made,
> As to a central sea, self-motion brings.

In His will is our peace. And, because Christ declared that will, His message, though it seem weak as the message of a child, is strong as God.

Unseen Realities

1 Cor. i. 28.—'Things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.'

St Paul's saying is not quite a paradox. It is rather a vivid and forceful way of saying what he often says, namely, that unseen and intangible realities build and shape the things we see. Indiscernibles are mighty factors. An invisible world is behind and within the visible one. We have slowly come to realize, as science has piled up its inferences and conclusions, that our visible world is only a fragment of a larger universe and swims in a vast invisible world which has no known or conceivable bounds. Out of this inexhaustible sea of energy come the forces which build our visible world—forces which we name and use but do not understand. Gravitation, cohesion, attraction, magnetism, electricity, molecular energy, ether-waves are a few of the words which stand for mighty forces. We say the words and look wise, as though our finger were on a secret. We know, however, no more about the real nature of these forces which build our world than Aladdin knew about the jinnee that reared his palace when he rubbed his lamp. We know little more than that the visible comes out of the invisible, and that we can learn how these invisible forces work and how to direct them for our practical ends.

Everywhere and always the invisible is the builder of the visible. Michelangelo saw the dome of St Peter's in the viewless realm of his own soul before he raised it into visible beauty above the groined arches of the cathedral. Every creation of art is an instance of the same truth. The form of beauty which comes forth into visible shape for the many to see and admire has first been an inner possession, growing into perfection in the spaceless soul of the creator, where only one could see it.

Plotinus used to hold that it is much truer to say that the body is in the soul than that the soul is in the body. And strange as it may sound, there is much to be said for this view of the ancient Greek philosopher. There are many good evidences to prove that some invisible reality builds and vivifies and directs this visible, corporeal bulk of ours. There is, for example, a tiny speech-centre in the left hemisphere of the human brain, so complicated that all the telegraphic instruments in the land, combined and worked from one central key, would make a very simple instrument compared with it. When a baby arrives here on his hazardous venture his speech-centre is not yet organized. Even if he knew all the wonders of the world he has left behind he could tell nothing about it—any more than Beethoven could have rendered a symphony without musical instruments. It looks as though the expanding mind of the child slowly organized and built this marvellous centre, which was only fleshy pulp before the organization was wrought out in it. There is, at any rate, no way to account in terms of matter for the transcendent meanings which burst into conscious-

ness at the sound of words, nor for the way in which conscious effort and attentive purpose build the little bridges between the cells of the brain and make of it an instrument for the spirit.

¶ Has man a soul? was the query of a placard in the street, and Dr Parker, seeing it, thundered that day his answer: 'No! He *has* a body; he *is* a soul.' It was a short, sharp way of expressing a truth not only of faith and religion, but a truth more and more strengthened and made credible by the progress of discovery in material science.[1]

We are, once more, all familiar with the way an invisible ideal holds and controls and dominates and constructs a life. It is one of the most notable features of our strange human experience. That which is not yet—for an ideal plainly is what ought to be but is not—works like a mighty energy. It upholds the spirit in hours of defeat. It makes one oblivious to pain. It conquers all opposition. It carries the will, contrary to all laws of mechanics, along the line of greatest resistance. It turns obstacles and hindrances into chariots of victory. It does the impossible. In Paul's great words, 'the things which are not bring to naught the things which are!' Dreams and visions and hopes are not so empty and useless as they often seem. Suddenly they find a potent voice, they grow mighty, they gather volume, and they do what cannon could not do.

One man with a dream, at pleasure
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample a kingdom down.

We, in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing
And Babel itself with our mirth;

And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying
Or one that is coming to birth.[2]

But deeper and surer than all other invisible realities is that Divine Spirit, not seen, but felt, who is the ground of our real being, the source of our longings, the inspirer of our larger hopes, the inner energy by which we live. Some think He must be dead or asleep or on a journey. They see such stalking evils, such collapses of civilization, such ugly shadows over the fair world, that they cannot hold their thin clue of faith any longer. But He is there all the same, though they see Him not nor know Him. Grace abounds, often unsuspected, even though sin seems so potent. Faith in something still holds men and women to their hard tasks of endurance. All that Christ was and is still attracts the soul that sees it. If an eclipse dims or veils the sight of Him for the moment, we may be sure that this warm, healing Sun of our life has not set. He is still there, and some of us continue to feel our hearts burn with His presence, which is as indubitable a reality as is the rock-ribbed earth upon which we tread.

What He needs is better organs to reveal Himself through, richer, truer, holier lives to show His love through, more finely organized personalities for His grace to break through into the world. He cannot do His work without us. He cannot preach without our lips, comfort without our help, heal without our hands, carry the truth without our feet, remove the shadow without our faith and effort. The invisible works through the visible, the unseen and eternal operates through little instruments like us![1]

[1] T. Yates, *The Strategies of Grace*, 106.
[2] A. W. O'Shaughnessy, *The Dreamers*.

A Brilliant Constellation

1 Cor. i. 30.—'Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'

THESE words of our text show profound insight and commanding intellectual grasp. The great abstract terms, handled as they are with consummate skill, tell us that we are in contact with a master mind. In the passage from which they are taken the Apostle is engaged in showing the Corinthian Christians that they owed their standing and privileges as Christians entirely to the favour of God. It behoved them, therefore, to be humble, and not to flatter themselves that it was because they were wiser

[1] Rufus M. Jones, *The World Within*, 6.

and better than other men, that they were Christians. By the grace of God they were what they were. Boasting with regard to their spiritual condition was excluded.

Christians of the present day require to be reminded of these truths, just as much as Christians of the first century of our era did. We are tempted to pride ourselves on our privileges—to forget, indeed, as some one has said, 'that they are privileges and to reckon them attainments.' And, as a result, we are apt to encourage in our minds a sense of self-righteous detachment from those who are indifferent or careless, which is essentially a worldly frame of mind, and utterly alien to the spirit of Christian sympathy and love.

But leaving the main subject of this section of the Apostle's letter, let us direct our attention to the statement which he makes with respect to Jesus Christ in the course of his argument. 'He was made of God unto us,' says St Paul, 'wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' What a brilliant constellation of magnificent expressions.

To begin with, let us make sure that we have hold of the proper translation of the Apostle's words. Two corrections require to be made. In the first place, the tense of the verb in the Authorized Version is wrong. It ought to be the past, not the present, 'was made,' not 'is made.' The Apostle's correspondents had not always been Christians. Their Christian life had a beginning; and that epoch occurred when Christ Jesus was made of God unto them all that the Apostle mentions. In the second place, the four majestic terms that succeed one another are not to be taken as forming a single series, of which each is a separate and independent member. Wisdom should be recognized as standing by itself, the other three being appended to it by way of definition. Hence the verse, correctly rendered, will read: 'Christ Jesus, who was made of God unto us wisdom—that is to say, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'

It is not easy to define wisdom. Ever since men began to reflect, they have sought to explain the nature of wisdom. The philosophers of ancient Greece especially, whose names were household words in Corinth and every Greek city, made themselves famous for all time by their efforts to solve this very problem. Without pretending to explore the subject, however, we can easily arrive at a good working notion of what is meant by wisdom. Let us start from the fact that men have always asked themselves certain profound questions about life and destiny, about goodness and God. Well, the condition of being unable to answer these most practical and most pressing of all questions we name ignorance. Again, the condition of being indifferent to the necessity of having these questions answered, or the condition of being contented with trivial and shallow answers, we call folly. Ignorance, on the one hand: folly, on the other. And finally, as over against both, do we not apply to that condition the term wisdom? This is the part which Jesus fulfils in the experience of Christian men and women. He is the answer to life's great interrogations.

Let us consider now these three great words—righteousness, sanctification, redemption.

1. *Righteousness.*—This means that the authority of Christ in the sphere of ethics is supreme. The ideal He sets before us is that we should daily realize that Divine Image in the likeness of which we were made. As Christians we cannot and dare not set before ourselves an ideal of conduct lower than the Divine. One reason why our Christianity in these days is often so ineffective is that we measure ourselves among ourselves, and are content if we can feel that we do not fall very far below the average of our fellow-believers.

Now, the work of Jesus Christ on the soul convinces man of sin, and at the same time elevates his whole moral ideal. He is no longer content with the beggarly elements of his former state, but is lifted up with a new air of expectation and with a larger ambition. But this in itself would be his ruin, were it not for the fact that Christ is to his renewed soul not only its standard of righteousness, but also its guarantee. Sharing as he does the life of his Lord, he shares also in His ethical perfection.

¶ Christianity is a heroic religion, and we are satisfied if our career can be summed up in the words which we see sometimes on old tombstones: 'He lived respected and died lamented.' St Paul, however, had a very different standard, not only for himself, but for all his comrades, 'Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the

measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.' We must understand these words in a sense which makes them reasonable, because God demands nothing of us which He will not enable us to perform. A Divine command is always a promise of help. Perfection in a human being is not absolute, but relative. It is the fulfilment of that kind and that degree of excellence which each of us was meant to exhibit. But in a sense the standard is absolute, is one which we can never suppose for a moment we have reached.[1]

'Christ is made unto us righteousness,' because the ideal which He sets before us is after all more real than the actual of our everyday lives. Or, as one has said: 'Which after all is the truest and deepest estimate of a man? That which is based on his actual imperfections and failures, or that which penetrates through all these, and sees only the divine idea of man, the glorious strength and incorruptible faith and stainless purity and unselfish devotion which are possible to him? That which is seen in a man is temporal; that which is unseen, or seen only to the heart that loves him, is eternal.' We shall at least be wise if we allow that God can see and know and judge us with this Divine insight, and according to the standards of His infinite grace.

2. *Sanctification.*—It is in something of the same way and for the same reason that Christ is to us also sanctification, the source and guarantee of the holy life. No little trouble has arisen from the persistency with which Christian people have regarded the redemptive or priestly work of Jesus as an accomplished fact. It is of course that in one sense—namely that there is no need for any further sacrifice, and that men are saved on the bare action of Jesus alone. But that does not mean that the work of salvation is concluded with the acceptance of God's mercy in Jesus Christ. That is the beginning of the Divine life in man, not its consummation. It is quite true that the new life is not the product of man's native energy—it comes from God, and is the gift of His grace; but all the same it is not to be buried in the earth but enjoyed and used. And in the using of it Christ will have His part as well as the disciple. This means that progress is the law of Christian as of all other life, and that for it Christ supplies not only the germ or seed, but the necessary conditions and environment.

We often boast that the introduction of Christianity into the world has been the greatest possible incentive to progress, and has brought about the benefits of our modern civilization; but we sometimes forget that what is civilization in the mass is sanctification in the individual. We are all born babes in Christ, and it is only through His help that we can attain the measure of the stature of a full-grown man. The standard of Christian thought and living common to many of us seems to show that we are contented to remain all our days in the cradle, and that we have not yet learnt aright to use the grace which we have received and wherein we stand. The work of faith does not come to an end in setting a man right before God; it is still needed for the sanctifying process of everyday life.

This is a point on which the Apostle Paul constantly insists. Faith in Christ becomes the energetic principle of a new life of Christian sanctity. To Him faith is the link which binds together religion and morality, the ethical and the spiritual life. It is true that in the history of the Christian Church the connection between faith and morals has not always been maintained. But this has been a departure from, and not a consequence of, the teaching of St Paul. To the Christian Christ becomes not only the pattern, but the one energy of the soul. This explains how it is that Christianity produces such marvellous results with humble and illiterate people, who may not be altogether capable of appreciating the loftiness of the ideal in Christ. It shows, too, how Christ becomes in a very real sense a test and a touchstone of religious life. Sneer as we may at the blemishes of Christian sainthood which history has revealed, it still remains true that we are called to be saints, and that Christ has, as it were, missed His vocation with us unless He has produced in us the saintly temper and quality.

¶ I remember a saying of Dr Dale, one of my chief teachers in spiritual things; it was made in the early part of my Christian life, and it has remained with me ever since. 'God has no use ultimately for a man that is not holy.' Such a man becomes really so much waste

[1] W. R. Inge.

material in God's universe; no use for him, and perhaps no room for him. Our Lord is to be the leader of an innumerable host of ransomed and sanctified people.[1]

3. *Redemption.*—The redemptive work of Christ stands first in the order of Divine purpose—from it follows the righteousness of God, and the holy life. But it is not as a mere personage in history that He makes His work here felt. He is to us—redemption. It is in our living experience of His saving power that the words come true. And it is a question not of the intensity of that experience, but of its nature and quality. As Professor Rufus Jones says, 'The Universe backs the experience.' The fact that it is ethical, has a historical origin, and produces palpable effects on the conscience, distinguishes it at once from all mystical dreams. The effect of Christ's redeeming work on us cannot and must not be merely mystic devotion; it must issue in a new life of service and a fuller and closer conformity to His will.

¶ As an eminent theologian has said: 'It is one thing to receive the Divine pardon; it is another to recover the Divine image. The first is the initial grace granted to the penitent sinner; the second is the glory of the perfected saint.'

The joy and glory of the gospel is that it brings to men freedom from the power and guilt of sin. This is the ground of our hope and the mainspring of our gratitude. But the gospel is not merely negative in its effects. It becomes to men the source and power of a new life—a life of clearer outlook and juster estimates and holier character.

Christ our Redemption

1 Cor. i. 30.—'Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'

One of the greatest titles we are taught to apply to our Lord is that of Redeemer. And yet it is doubtful if, as a title, it conveys any particular notion to our minds; and if it does it is very likely to be a notion which has in it less, or more, than the truth. The proper meaning of the Greek Testament word is to 'liberate'—to liberate at a cost, if you will, but, primarily and fundamentally, to liberate without necessary reference to cost or manner of liberation. The Latinized word 'redemption,' which a Sunday-school child will tell you means 'buying back,' is a mistranslation, if it is allowed to impose on our mind notions of bargaining, or purchase, or concrete payment. Redemption is not so much a transaction carried out, as an effect produced. And thus Christ as Redeemer is Christ the Liberator, the Deliverer—loosing us or saving us from our sins, redeeming us from all iniquity. The fundamental idea is of liberation, and must not be complicated with, or spoilt by, transactional notions which belong to the market but have no place in the spiritual world.

What is a sin? and how in practical reality can you liberate a man from sinning? It does not mean undoing the past, because redemption does not undo the past. A man's sinful deeds can no more be undone than the repentance of the world can undo the Cross. The past stands. It is indelible. Evil deeds done are facts, and facts are stubborn as adamant. How then can we be liberated from our sins?

Acts in themselves are physical things, and they only acquire a moral character from the conscience of those concerned. A wound inflicted by one man upon another is a physical thing; we need to look behind it to see if it has any moral character at all. It was an accident, or it was inflicted in self-defence, or as an act of justice, or with malicious purpose. Its moral character depends upon its purpose. Now nothing can undo the wounding as a physical fact; whether inflicted accidentally or on purpose, it abides as an historical fact; whether repented of, or not needing to be repented of, its physical character stands, and even if healed the scar testifies to the physical occurrence.

But there is a thing that can be undone, and that is the moral attitude represented by the malice which chose (if so it did) to inflict a wound. That malice can live on quite apart from the deed in the consciousness of the doer; and it is there—in the conscience, or the consciousness, of the doer—that the sin is found. There is sin, and there is sin's penalty. 'Sin' is really an abstraction—the solid reality is a person sinning. Of course, you get the man's

[1] Charles Brown.

discreditable acts ; but as they pass into history, they lose their personal relations, and become merged in the common framework of men's lives. But his self, with the evil tendency, abides with him. And here is the problem that calls for redemption, or liberation, namely, not the question of how to put men's evil deeds right, but how to put right the sinful selves of men, in whom lie tendencies to sinful acts yielded to and installed as masters. Selves are the only things which can be redeemed or liberated from sin ; and it is in respect of these that Christ stands before us as Redeemer or Liberator. Not merely does He give redemption, but He *is* our Redemption. Redemption of persons is found in a Person. He needed to do certain acts and pass through certain experiences—to live, suffer, die, rise—as He qualified Himself to serve as Redeemer. But ultimately the Redemption is Himself.

Now what does it mean to redeem, or liberate, men from sinning ? We do not want a literary theory, or a legalistic theory which can be stated in logical terms on paper, but which is at the end what it was at the beginning, paper and ink. We want facts, we want realities—something that actually operates, and operates spiritually to liberate men.

¶ Victor Hugo was one of the few novelists who have understood the Atonement. In *Les Misérables* he puts the truth in that oft-told story of the escaping convict, Jean Valjean, hospitably entertained by the good old curé, and robbing him of his silver candlesticks. When the *gens d'armes* caught and brought him back with the booty in his possession, the curé said, ' Why should he not take them, they are his ? ' Then, when the astonished officers of the law had retired, ' Jean Valjean, I have bought you from yourself ; go and be a better man.' [1]

Well, then, to liberate men from sin is to modify their sinful selves in such a way that the tendency of the self ceases to be towards evil, and is definitely directed towards good. It means the liberation of the self, conscience, consciousness, will, faculty, instinct, so that the man who was doing evil things ceases to be the man who can do those things. It is not a question of what the man is reckoned, it is of what he actually is, and (perhaps even more) is on the way to becoming. Liberation is a problem touching the very depths of personality. It is a vast, a titanic problem—to redeem, or liberate, not merely one human soul, but a world of human souls, and the succession of human souls which pass through the world as the generations follow one another, and to carry on that work to its completion in the world beyond the grave. It baffles the imagination, and yet this is the problem whose solution Christianity proclaims in Christ.

[1] H. H. Snell.

We must think of Christ as Redeemer in two ways : *objectively*, that is to say, in His pre-eminence as the world's agent of redemption, and *subjectively*, in His redeeming activity within those who will receive Him.

1. First, then, *objectively*. Jesus Christ is in Himself Redemption. When He took our flesh and moved on earth, there had come into the world something literally new. He wore our human form and was very Man—true, He thought through a human brain : and yet, for all His continuity with us, He was a new fact in human history. He was master of His soul, with a moral force and certainty which placed Him in a category apart. He showed Himself an entirely free spirit. He attained His freedom not without tears or sweat or blood ; but He carried His manhood through life with a victorious advance that never halted. No worry, no doubt, no rivalry or self-seeking, no moral guilt, no regret or bitter memories, or blunting of sensibility through sin, no waste of power through misdirected instinct or division of mind.

The manifested existence of a moral consciousness of the kind that was in Christ, is in itself a Redemption of the world. The world is different for it. A new fact of such magnitude is not merely a revolution, it is a new birth of humanity. That such a Being who can say of Himself, ' No man knoweth the Father save the son, and he to whomsoever the son will reveal him '—that such a Being who can claim to have dealt a death-blow to the forces of evil, and can say, ' I was watching Satan as lightning fallen from heaven '—that such a One should have stood on our earth, worn our flesh, shared our lot, and have been untainted by our sin, makes our world, our flesh, our lot different for ever. The tide has been forcibly turned. Man can be—has been—undefeated. Here is freedom's charter.

¶ One part of the good news which Christ told us about God was that God would free us from evil, awake in us a new life, and open before us boundless possibilities of growth ; and He showed us in His own life that men could be freed from evil. He lived before us the new life ; and He made manifest the spiritual perfection of man. 'This, then,' said those who followed Him, and notably St Paul, 'this which God did in His Son Jesus, He will do in all His other sons.' Into this perfect life which was made manifest in Christ, we are all to grow—growing up into Him in all things who is the Head, even Christ.[1]

And this is a living and acting fact in the world to-day. This is what is effected by the Resurrection followed by the coming of the Holy Ghost, namely that the Christ of the spiritual experience recorded in the New Testament is a Figure of our own times, that this liberating Person is not recumbent in remote rest but stands in vigorous operation. The reason of the Church's existence is to hold up this Redeemer or Liberator of souls before the world—to familiarize it with the wonder that has been wrought out in our flesh and blood.

2. Redemption has also its *subjective* aspect. Christ is the Redeemer of the race at large—but each man must consent to undergo redemption. The redemption of a soul is a process that needs to work itself out in the soul that is to be redeemed. It is not a thing that can be done by proxy, or in its absence. By the will of God we must be co-agents with the Redeemer. Redemption is the work of the Redeeming Person in persons and with persons ; and it is the reproduction of the life of the Redeemer in the redeemed.

Redemption operates from within outwards. It is Christ working within us—Christ seating Himself on the throne of our being, at the very centre of personality. A radical redemption without the Redeeming Person is a thing that does not happen. We cannot redeem ourselves, except superficially. The man on the operating table cannot be his own surgeon, he must lie in the hands of another.

However much we may dislike the phrase, 'original sin' represents an intractable fact of human experience. Man needs a deliverer, and he must look beyond himself. And in Christ he finds this 'beyond' that is within—not himself in any guise or disguise, but another—and yet another so intimately near that he can say, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' And this vital, healing Personality, blending Himself with ours, is life and health to it, and imparts Himself to it and attracts us into His likeness. He, in fact, in His deep activities, does what friendship, in its relatively superficial operations, does. Through fellowship He touches the springs of motive in that 'hinterland' below or behind consciousness which is so unrealized and yet so potent in its domination over our feelings and moods. He takes His place there and reorganizes the man from within.

Let us make no mistake about the Christian redemption. It is not merely a high type of self-regarding moral culture. Christ is not a mere teacher of liberating notions—notions quite independent of Himself. He is the Redemption. A great deal, of course, can be done by those who follow Christ's teaching and hold it without any thought of Christ. They can repent of their sins and turn over a new leaf, as it is called. But the extent of such a redemptiom is strictly limited—it is limited by their own capacities or incapacities. But where faith reaches out and brings in Christ, self-dependence gives way to reliance on Him in whom is Life and Healing and Light. Of His fullness we receive, in Him we look back to a new lineage and forward to a new expansion, no longer sons of Adam but sons of God. The measure of redemption is not our finiteness, but God's infinity.

It is this reaching out to a Person—the beyond who is yet within—that saves the Christian redemption from being a pursuit of selfish personal gain. Love for Christ makes self-centredness a breach of trust. Love diverts attention from self. It is no æsthetic sentimentalism. It is only real when Christ is loved in His suffering brethren. The love that thus serves, grows self-forgettingly into Christ's likeness. The supreme redemption is the redemption from self, redemption into love and service. And the one sufficient motive for this is Christ. He knits mankind into a unity, and bids those whom He has redeemed focus His redemption upon the points of human life they touch.

Those who are becoming free must set others

[1] Stopford A. Brooke, *Sunshine and Shadow*, 105.

free; the redeemed must mediate redemption. It is in this way, namely, as we serve God and men in Christ's name here and now—it is in this way that we experience and we extend the redemption, the liberation, that is Christ.

¶ The word redemption, all the past which it implies, all the future which it points to, has for me a wonderful charm. I cannot separate the idea of deliverance from the idea of God, or ever think of man as blessed except as he enters into God's redeeming purpose, and labours to make others free.[1]

Saving Knowledge

1 Cor. ii. 2.—'I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.'

When the Apostle tells us that he is determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, he impresses upon our minds that this is 'the hidden wisdom which God hath ordained before the world.' He means that to know Christ crucified is the maximum of knowledge, not the minimum. He means that in Jesus Christ and Him crucified all doctrines culminate, and from Jesus Christ and Him crucified all duties emanate and evolve. We live in a world which may well be illustrated as a labyrinth, and as we pursue our way, there are many deviating paths down which we may be tempted to wander. But for us who desire practical wisdom for the conduct of life, we do not want a map of the whole labyrinth; what we do want is a silver thread which may pass through our hands and guide us to the secret part of all things. That guiding thread St Paul claims to give us in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

¶ A company of young men were once met at supper in the old days of Athens, and Socrates, the great teacher of morality, was present. The conversation turned on their guest. 'Socrates,' said Alcibiades, 'is like the figure of the Wood-god which you see in the workshops of sculptors: if you open it, you shall find it filled with images of all the gods.' That was the highest praise which in those days of heathen worship it was possible to give to a human being. It was as much as to say that all the forms of Divine life imagined and worshipped at that time were to be found in the one life of Socrates. And, far off, it may be taken as an outshadowing of the reality presented to us in this word of St Paul concerning Christ.[1]

1. To know Christ crucified is to know the meaning of life.

(1) The Cross of Christ throws light upon the problem of *human suffering*. Sorrow and pain pass no man by; and no reasoning can argue them out of existence, or reduce our fight with disease and suffering to a phantom battle. Living in a world where the blows of misfortune are constantly falling; where the ravages of suffering are nowhere long absent; where development yields new pain; where increasing knowledge, increasing refinement, increasing goodness and sympathy mean increasing sorrow, it is no wonder that the Cross appeals to human hearts everywhere as a symbol of human life, and holds us under the spell of a solemn fascination. Rejoice as we may—and we ought to rejoice—in all that brightens and sweetens life, yet the fellowship of suffering is wider and deeper than the fellowship of happiness. A German poet has said that the image of humanity, broken in all its limbs, transfixed in hands and feet and sorrowful unto death, has become distasteful to men; but that can be true of men only in their light, careless, self-indulgent hours. In all our deeper experiences our feet tread the path that leads to Calvary, and we seek the Man of Sorrows acquainted with grief. Christ has not diminished the suffering of the world, but He has given it a new and nobler meaning, made it appear to be no longer God's wrath and curse, but God's love and blessing.

¶ To-day I had a long and strange interview with a lady who has recently become a member of the congregation. She asked me if I had ever known a case of trial so severe as hers. 'Yes,' I replied: 'numbers; it is the case of all. Suffering is very common, so is disappointment.' 'Are our affections to be all withered?' 'Very often, I believe.' 'Then why were they given me?' 'I am sure I cannot tell you that, but I suppose it would not have been very good for you to have had it all your own way.' 'Then, do you think I am better for this blighting succession of griefs?' 'I do not know, but I know you

[1] *Life of Frederick Denison Maurice*, i. 520.

[1] A. Macleod.

ought to be.' Wordsworth was lying open on the table, and I pointed her to these lines :—

Then was the truth received into my heart,
That, under heaviest sorrow earth can bring,
If from the affliction somewhere do not grow
Honour which could not else have been, a faith,
An elevation, and a sanctity,
If new strength be not given nor old restored,
The blame is ours, not Nature's.

The deep undertone of this world is sadness : a solemn bass occurring at measured intervals, and heard through all other tones. Ultimately, all the strains of this world's music resolve themselves into that tone ; and I believe that rightly felt, the Cross, and the Cross alone, interprets the mournful mystery of life—the sorrow of the Highest, the Lord of Life ; the result of error and sin, but ultimately remedial, purifying, and exalting.[1]

(2) In the Cross we learn the meaning of *self-sacrifice*. The Cross, as the revelation and symbol of redemption through sacrifice, needs to be brought back to our common life. So far as the principle is concerned, it is right to apply, and we do instinctively apply, all the New Testament phraseology of redemption to parents sacrificing themselves for the good of their children, to patriots suffering and dying for the sacred causes of justice and freedom, to the vast army of labourers who procure for us our necessities and luxuries at the cost of their nobler growth and comfort. Without shedding of blood—blood of body, blood of brain, blood of heart—there has been no remission of sins, no redemption from evil conditions, no progress from a lower to a higher state of society. Figuratively, if not literally, men have been crucified, their hands torn, their hearts pierced through with many sorrows, in the interest of every onward step and movement of mankind. The work which really helps the world—work of statesman and philanthropist, work of poet and painter and doctor, work of teacher and preacher—is work into which men put their life, their heart's blood. It is this power to give without counting the cost to one's self, this power of suffering and sacrifice, that is the secret of all redeeming work.

¶ There is a story told in the American *Missionary Review of the World* of a medical missionary in China, Dr Barlow, who saw many of the Chinese dying from a disease caused by a small parasite known as a fluke. The life-history of this minute organism was unknown, and Dr Barlow determined to find out how it caused disease by experimenting on himself. ' One Sunday morning,' he says, ' I took thirty-two of the flukes from the body of a patient in the hospital, put them into a tumbler, locked my office door, and drank them down.' He told no one what he had done, but as soon as he could, he boarded a ship and came to America. There, in the John Hopkins' University—one of the great medical schools of the world—he told the doctors. The result is that the cause of the disease is now ascertained, and medical science is well on the track of its cure.

(3) In the Cross we realize the meaning of *sin*. The great mystery of life, in presence of which the others hardly count, is sin. This is the one thing which after all speculation remains opaque and impenetrable. No reason can cast the faintest gleam of real light upon it. Those who explain it as a mere negation, an unreality—those who regard it simply as an imperfection, and to be outgrown—those who tell us it is but good in the making, and that a bad conscience is the growing pains of the soul —are all alike, when the conscience listens to them, madmen. It is they who are unreal, and whose ingenuities appal by their frivolity and irrelevance the soul which is actually at grips with evil. But though no philosophy as such has ever been able to rationalize sin, though in a world created and sustained by a good God it is and remains an enigma to the mind, at the Cross some light falls upon it : we see that whatever its origin, God takes the burden of it on Himself. He does not stand afar off, and decline to have anything to do with the sinful world which owes to Him its being. He bears its sin. He enters into the situation sin has created. He takes the pain, the shame, the death it involves, upon Himself : and in so doing He overcomes it and enables us to overcome.[1]

(4) In the Cross we come to know the *victory of failure*. The Cross is the revelation and symbol of victory, but of victory in failure and because of failure. There never was such an apparent failure as the Crucifixion. But the Cross was not the end but the beginning—the beginning of victory—an endless victory to the

[1] *Life and Letters of F. W. Robertson*, 285.

[1] J. Denney, *The Way Everlasting*, 22.

cause of goodness in the world. There are successes which are sadder than any failures, and failures that are more glorious than any successes. It was by the way of the Cross Jesus went up to power and influence and glory—to the throne of human reverence and love. And the history of all that is best on this earth is one continuous illustration of this law of the Cross.

¶ History is full of the records of failure that ended in honour and victory. Think of the man, Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian. He laboured, taught, suffered, bled, endured prison, obloquy, was hunted with bloodhounds, hanged in effigy; the cause which he loved was trampled out, the people for whom he fought enslaved, everything was apparently lost for a time. He lived to see that cause triumphant, his name revered, his heroism and purity acknowledged by the world, and his death is still mourned by a whole nation in tears.[1]

All through life I see a Cross
Where sons of God yield up their breath;
There is no gain except by loss,
There is no life except through death;
Nor glory but in bearing shame,
Nor justice but in taking blame;
And that Eternal Passion saith—
Be emptied of glory and right and name.

2. To know Christ crucified is to know the love of God.

In one of the ancient churches of Central Italy there is a unique representation of the Crucifixion. Behind the Christ on the Cross we catch a dim vision of the Eternal Father; the hands of the Father behind the hands of the Son, and the nails which pierce the Son piercing the Father also. We shrink from it at first as coarse and rude, but as we think about it we feel that it is the old painter saying, in the only language which he could command, what has been so long and strangely forgotten, if not in form yet in reality, that God is in Christ, that the Father is in the Son, that His love had not to be won by sacrifice, that it is His love which is embodied in the sacrifice, that the Cross and Passion are the revelation in time and space, in visible and historical form, of the grief and pain of a God who suffers for and with His creation and His children.

Everywhere the love of God is seen in suffering and sacrifice. The compassion of men is not the accusation of His goodness, but the revelation and proof of it. The sorrows, the sacrifices, the martyrdoms of the world's helpers are His. The sacrifice of the Cross is not made to God; it is made by God, it is part of the universal and perpetual sacrifice God is ever and everywhere making in order to take away the sorrow and sin of the world.

3. To know Christ crucified is to know the power of a new life.

St Paul wanted to find a power that should be adequate to cope with men's dispositions and reach down to the very centre of feeling, and that should take hold of men's wills. And he found that power in Christ. They who long after better things find their ideal in Him; He lives on by the cords of love, He bids them live righteously and holily in this present world; and with the command comes the power. There is power in Christ to transform the nature and to renew the life; and because the Apostle knew this, he made Him the theme of his preaching, and uplifted Him before the longing eyes of Jew and Gentile.

¶ David Brainerd tells us at the end of his *Journal* what it was that he preached among his Indians. 'I never got away,' he says, 'from Jesus, and Him crucified, and I found that when my people were gripped by this great evangelical doctrine of Christ, and Him crucified, I had no need to give them instructions about morality. I found that one followed as the sure and inevitable fruit of the other.'

Pausing a moment ere the day was done,
While yet the earth was scintillant with light,
I backward glanced. From valley, plain, and height,
At intervals, where my life-path had run,
Rose cross on cross; and nailed upon each one
Was my dead self. And yet that gruesome sight
Lent sudden splendour to the falling night,
Showing the conquests that my soul had won.

Up to the rising stars I looked and cried,
'There is no death! for year on year, re-born
I wake to larger life: to joy more great,
So many times have I been crucified,
So often seen the resurrection morn,
I go triumphant, though new Calvaries wait.'[1]

[1] J. G. Greenhough.

[1] Ella Wheeler Wilcox, *Poems of Experience*, 31.

Culture and the Cross

1 Cor. ii. 2.—'I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.'

Practically all through the world's history there have been two apparently irreconcilable ideals that have governed men's living and thinking. We can describe these by various terms, each of which perhaps adds something to our understanding of the contrast: self-development and self-denial, self-expression and self-repression, self-realization and self-sacrifice, Hellenism and Hebraism, culture and the Cross.

1. *The Ideal of Culture.*—From the root-meaning of the word we get the conception that by the tilling, the cultivation of a field, all its powers, all its possibilities of fruitfulness and development are brought to realization; so that the whole principle of culture might be expressed thus: we have our human heritage—the body, with its natural craving for meat and drink and rest and exercise, and its enjoyment in the use of all the senses; the mind, with its curiosity after truth and its joy in wrestling with work; the imagination, with its eager delight in beauty; the will, with its passion for domination and power; the heart, with its yearnings for love and friendship and the sweet intimacies of home.

Here is our heritage; what are we to do with it? The answer of the Greek was unhesitating and clear. The very existence of an instinct or a faculty was enough to justify its satisfaction. In spite of the serious breakdown of Greek thought in its practical application in the life of the nation, there is a side of our nature to which this conception most powerfully appeals; there is at first sight a sanity about it that seems its complete justification. Surely each man has the right to use, develop, and enjoy all those powers that God has given to him. But there have been ages in the world's history, there are moods in each man's life, when this ideal fails to satisfy, and so we find its complete opposite exercising its influence on the minds and lives of men.

2. *The Ascetic Ideal.*—It holds that religion means not the development, but the repression of all our natural instincts; that not to cultivate, but to crucify oneself, is the road to perfection. It accepts unhesitatingly what George Meredith calls the lesson of the flesh—

> The lesson writ in red since first Time ran
> A hunter hunting down the beast in man;
> That till the chasing out of its last vice,
> The flesh was fashioned but for sacrifice.

The ascetic ideal, when rigidly pursued, has again and again resulted in various forms of self-torture, and mutilation, and withdrawal from the world. Many of these forms found a home in the Christian Church: solitary anchorites like the hermits of Egypt; pillar-saints like St Simeon Stylites; flagellants like Anthony of Padua, who lashed themselves in public, singing penitential Psalms: and the great Monastic system generally, which ultimately spread throughout the whole of Christendom. But we would not be doing justice to their attitude, if we made it appear that their sole motive was an intense desire to keep themselves unspotted from the world, and to avoid temptation. There were two deeper objects in their attempts at complete severance from the world's evil.

One was to reduce the rebellious flesh to subjection to a higher law of holiness. They would tear up evil from their nature by the roots, and enter the Kingdom, maimed if need be, with honourable scars of conflict, like the soldier's mutilated limb, a royal seal signal of service. It became in later times a formal method, and even a fashion, but the great ascetics were moved by the profound longing to have done altogether with sin, and to attain moral purity.

¶ Maeterlinck, in one of his Essays, shows how there is a kind of instinct driving us at times to seek for reality in the only place where we shall probably find it—on the sharp peaks of pain. All those legends about the nightingale pressing its breast against a thorn in order to be able to pour its deathless music forth into the night; of the pelican feeding its young with drops of blood from its own breast, bear evidence to the fact that mankind has always had an instinctive feeling that the world of sentient things could never come to its highest expression apart from some revelation of sorrow or suffering.[1]

[1] Hubert L. Simpson, *The Intention of His Soul*, 39.

The mark of rank in nature
Is capacity for pain;
And the anguish of the singer
Makes the sweetness of the strain.

The other object was the ambition to penetrate the secrets of the celestial light, to devote themselves to divine contemplation that they might enter into a fuller spiritual communion. Tennyson with great insight expresses this longing in his study of St Simeon Stylites, who is made to describe his terrible sufferings voluntarily endured, as he lay with his right leg chained into the crag, before he changed it for his even more uncomfortable posture on the pillar; and in his description he reveals what led him to seek such hardships.

Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,
I lived up there on yonder mountain side.

The object of the ascetic was not merely to procure the dominion of the good over the bad by the rigid practice of self-denial, but thereby to use what was believed to be the approved method of entering into communion with God.[1]

3. *The Reconciliation of the Two Ideals in Christ.* To the Corinthians there came, as there comes to us, the necessity of reconciling these two apparently opposite ideals if they were to make the most of the life that God had given them. And St Paul's teaching is as full of meaning and wisdom to us to-day as it was nearly two thousand years ago; it took, of course, the line specially suggested by their special circumstances and needs. Their life, as we see from this letter, was rich and full: they 'came behind in no spiritual gift.' But the ascetic ideal, foreign to the very air they breathed, had lost its right place in their lives. And the message they needed, and he gave, was Jesus Christ, and this Jesus crucified. He sums up his message as the message of the Cross. It becomes then necessary to inquire what was the message of Jesus as to the place of the two ideals in the life of His followers, a message given not merely in His words, but in His life and death upon the Cross.

Though isolated sayings have been quoted to prove that Jesus was an ascetic, He was not so, nor did He preach asceticism. He did not live as an ascetic. The records are full of His social intercourse with all sorts of people, rich and poor, saint and sinner. He accepted invitations to feasts; went to a marriage; sat down to dinner with hospitable Pharisees; was a frequent visitor at the house of Martha and Mary at Bethany. 'To an ordinary layman the life of an anchorite might appear in the highest degree opposed to that of the Teacher, who began His mission at a marriage feast.'[1]

He did not ask those who believed on Him to forsake their ordinary work and follow Him, as He asked the inner circle of disciples to do. The special calling of the disciples was a practical necessity for the doing of the work He designed. Jesus asked others to remain in their place in life, and bring their faith to bear on all the circumstances of their lot. The disciples were called on to make sacrifices for the gospel's sake, but neither in their subsequent practice, nor in their teaching after the death of Christ, do we find anything to indicate that they imagined that their Master had intended an ascetic community.

That the Christian life demands self-denial Jesus taught distinctly. Self-denial must always have a place in the Christian life, if need be to the cutting off a hand and plucking out an eye, though at the best that is to enter the Kingdom maimed; but to look upon mortification as in itself a virtue is a perversion of our Lord's gospel. What He asks for is love, not the painful austerities which minister to spiritual pride. He asks men to accept God as their Father, and live humbly and sweetly in the light of that fact. He asks men to live in the same filial relation as He did, to come after Him in spirit, in spite of the ambitions and desires that war against the good, and in spite of the evil of the world.

¶ In [the Christianity of the gospel there is very little trace of asceticism. The delight in life is clearly indicated, and the only sort of self-denial that is taught is the self-denial that ends in simplicity of life, and in the joyful and courageous shouldering of inevitable burdens. Self-denial was not to be practised in a spiritless and timid way, but rather as a man accepts the fatigues and dangers of an expedition, in a vigorous and adventurous mood. One does not think of the men who go on some Artic exploration, with all the restric-

[1] Hugh Black, *Culture and Restraint*, 162.

[1] Lecky, *European Morals*, ii. 111.

tions of diet that they have to practice, all the uncomfortable rules of life they have to obey, as renouncing the joys of life; they do so naturally, in order that they may follow a livelier inspiration.[1]

In all Christ's teaching on self-denial it must never be forgotten that it always meant to Him some larger good. Self-repression was always a stage to a truer self-expression. The end is not a broken, wounded life, but fullness of life, true life for the first time, so large and full that it can be called even here eternal life. We are easily deceived about this, because we look so much on the externals. We see religion making a man give up this and that, curtailing here and there, sometimes we see even what looks like cutting off a right hand and plucking out a right eye; and we are inclined to think that religion means the weakening and impoverishing of life. But faith can dispense with much of the outward, just because it enriches the inward. To be open on the side of God, responsive to spiritual influences, is to have unclosed a larger and ever larger world of thought, and feeling, and aspiration.

What was a speck expands into a star.

Restraint, in Christ's thought, is always a stage to a truer culture, a completer saving of the life. He asks for obedience, and when we obey we discover that in obeying Him we are obeying the law of our own life: He asks for service, and when we serve we learn that His service is perfect freedom: He asks us to lose our life, and lo, in losing it we find it.[2]

An Open Secret

1 Cor. ii. 7, 8.—'But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.'

The immediate reference in this passage, and the whole argument of which it is a part, is to the Greek 'mysteries,' with the existence of which the Greek-speaking members of this Corinthian church necessarily possessed some acquaintance. What those mysteries actually were cannot now be ascertained in detail, but we may say that they were secret rites and ceremonies appertaining to certain religious cults of the period. Persons initiated into those mysteries were supposed to acquire thereby a deeper knowledge of Divine truth than was accessible to the uninitiated multitude, and to receive into their souls a certain infusion of Divine life. The mysteries consisted of ceremonial purifications, sacrificial offerings, songs, dances, dramatic performances, and the like. A great deal of solemnity and impressiveness surrounded them, but the occult wisdom of which they were popularly believed to be the vehicles need not have been hidden from the gaze of the world; there was nothing very much to hide. Paul here makes an allusion to them, not because he had any confidence in the claims put forward regarding them, but because everybody was more or less familiar with them. What he says in substance is that he can truthfully make a similar claim for his gospel. It, too, is Divine wisdom in a mystery, hidden wisdom, revealed to the initiated by the will of God. This is frankly a figure of speech. He did not mean that there was anything dark and occult in the religion of Jesus, anything shrouded from the apprehension of simple minds. It is only a mystery—a thing hidden—he says, to them who are not spiritually-minded.

It is among the first principles of the gospel that it recognizes no aristocracy, no natural privilege, no monopoly in the deep things of God. Whosoever will may come. And there is not in the gospel itself any region inaccessible to the ordinary man. There is in it no holiest of all which is forbidden ground to the multitude. It lays all the wares it has to offer for public sale in the light of day. Nor indeed does it merely keep open shop, and wait for customers to come and buy. It goes afield, and makes market of the whole earth. Its merchandise—priceless in a double sense, that it is beyond price and that it has no price—is urged upon a needy race without respect of colour or of capacity. It is, and cannot help being, missionary and propagandist; it wants every man to share its open secret.

¶ I am not prepared to admit that there is, or can be, properly speaking, in the world anything that is too sacred to be known. That spiritual beauty and spiritual truth are in their nature communicable and that they should be communicated, is a principle which lies at the root of every conceivable religion. Christ was

[1] A. C. Benson, *Joyous Gard*, 207.
[2] Hugh Black, *Culture and Restraint*, 343.

crucified upon a hill, and not in a cavern, and the word Gospel itself involves the same idea as the ordinary name of a daily paper.[1]

But—and here is the paradox—it is not every man who can enter into this secret. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,' says St Paul; he cannot know them. There is an aristocratic principle, there is exclusion, there is privilege; and it is bad news for the ordinary man. For are we not all natural men?

¶ A mystery is a thing hidden and secret; the mysteries of the Kingdom of God are such things as lie hidden in the Kingdom of God; but he that knows Christ aright, knows what God's kingdom is, and what therein is to be found. There are mysteries, because secret and hidden from human sense and reason, when the Holy Ghost does not reveal them; for though many hear of them, they neither conceive nor understand them. There are now many among us who preach of Christ, and hear much spoken of Him, as that He gave Himself to death for us, but this lies only upon the tongue, and not in the heart; for they neither believe it, nor are sensible of it; as St Paul says: 'The natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.'[2]

But if the natural man cannot know this secret, it is his own fault that he remains a natural man. He need not continue to be a natural man; he can become a supernatural man. If he is shut out of this knowledge, it is because he shuts himself out. There is exclusion, but it is self-exclusion; there is privilege, but it is denied to no man; there is an esoteric Christianity, but it requires no faculty to become familiar with it that every living soul does not possess.

If they had known they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. They did not know what they were doing, as Jesus said. They did not see; they did not understand. Christianity is not primarily believing anything or doing anything, but seeing something. In His conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus is reported as laying down the principle definitely. Everything begins with seeing the Kingdom of God. And you will recall how persistent in the Fourth Gospel is the stress upon sight and light. The primary task of religion is not to improve men, to make them behave better; it is not even the reformation of character; it is to reveal something, and the fundamental and characteristic Christian experience is that a man sees the thing revealed. And when it comes to a man, it is like the spark that passes between the two poles of an electric battery. 'Whereas I was once blind,' he says, 'I now see.'

¶ Mr Hogg of Madras, in his valuable little book, *Christ's Message of the Kingdom*, distinguishes between people who are salted and people who are salt—the folk who are Christianized and the folk who are Christian. The former are the people who have been improved by Christianity; the latter are the people who have been transfigured by it. On the one hand you have men and women who are living on the secular plane, but whose selfishness has been modified, whose passions have been tamed, whose good nature has been stimulated by Christian influence. They are good, law-abiding, respectable citizens. But on the other hand there are people who have passed through a transforming experience, and who have a specific and unique quality of bearing and character, who are careful about some things that we are not interested in, and careless about things that matter to us. We find them everywhere—in business and in the professions—and there is no mistaking them. There is, even in the stress of business, a certain apartness, a certain detachment, a certain unworldliness about them which sets them in a class of their own. These are the people who have passed beyond the stage of being Christianized to that of being actually and vitally Christian, the people whom St Paul calls spiritual.[1]

The first reaction of the gospel does not give the individual a new nature; it gives him a new world. What happens is that he sees the Kingdom of God—a divine order of life, a world of values and ends, a universe of life and behaviour in which the customary motives and aims of the secular order seem wholly irrelevant; a world which at once authenticates itself to what he knows is best and truest in him: and he says, 'That is it; that is reality; I have found it.' There is the way, the truth, the life; and to that he belongs for evermore. He may deny the things he has seen, but then

[1] G. K. Chesterton, *Robert Browning*.
[2] *Luther's Table Talk*, 21.

[1] R. Roberts.

his life becomes a continuous tragedy. He may reject the vision after he has seen it, but every day he knows his life is miscarrying. But if he lives in this world he has seen, he becomes aware of changing attitudes within himself. Money, for instance, becomes a different thing to him. It becomes a holy thing. It is minted life, and should be a vehicle of life. He values it for its spiritual uses. He values his business for its spiritual opportunities. He values his home for its spiritual discipline. He values the world for its sacramental meaning. All things, says St Paul, are become new to him.

If the rulers of this world had seen this other world, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. They would have known what He was, would have divined His secret. To them He was but a disturber of the peace, a troublesome fanatic; at the best, a well-meaning but mistaken dreamer whom it was best to put out of the way. The common people thought He was a prophet; Nicodemus conceded Him to be a teacher sent from God. But they all missed the rest—that ultra human quality in which His real meaning lay. There is that in Him which eye cannot see and no rational or critical analysis can disclose, a margin of mystery that is not penetrable by sense or natural faculty. And we, like all these others, will be outsiders from Him, separated from His loving heart by that same veil of mystery until we have the inner eye opened which can pierce it, until we have the mind of Christ to which this opaqueness becomes transparent.

The Things which God hath Prepared

1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.—'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit.'

What things are these? The answer to the question would comprehend all the wealth of the New Testament glory. It would include all that is meant by 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' For these things are just the holy ministries which are hidden in Christ Jesus and Him crucified. They are the succeeding possibilities of the Divine purposes that open up for the redeemed soul.

¶ 'The things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.' Hereafter, and up there, above the clouds, you have been taught to think; until you were informed by your land-surveyors that there was neither up nor down; but only an axis of x and an axis of y; and by aspiring aeronauts that there was nothing in the blue but damp and azote. And now you don't believe these things are prepared anywhere? They are prepared just as much as ever, when and where they used to be: just now, and here, close at your hand.[1]

The Apostle Paul was answering the cultured men of Corinth who found his message incredible and worthless by declaring that the ordinary powers of discernment, however disciplined and refined they might be, are not competent to receive these treasures of grace. He declines to submit the mysteries of God to their handling. He repudiates their tests. These things are not judged by the sight of the eyes and by the hearing of the ear, nor even by the trained and well-balanced intellect. They require for their perception a culture which no schools can give, a culture which comes direct from the Spirit of God to the spirit of man, and which is only bestowed upon them that love Him. He claims for himself and his fellow-Christians, an endowment peculiar and unique, an apprehension which others have not of the things which make up the higher and diviner life. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard. . . . But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.'

Eye hath not seen.—We cannot be in modern Athens for an hour, and gaze upon some of the noble relics of the early centuries, without receiving the conviction that the eye of the Greek had been marvellously trained and disciplined in the perception and creation of artistic beauty. They laid hold of stone and marble and touched them into grace. They subdued obstinate metal into the exquisite lines of their own dreams. And what they made they had first seen. They had seen the stateliness of the moving clouds and the amazing pageantry of the skies. They had seen the curve of the breaking wave, and they had transferred its grace to sculptured stone. They had seen the secret refinement of trees and flowers. Their artistic sense was of the rarest and loftiest

[1] Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera*.

order, but the sense which can perceive material graces is not the sense which perceives and appropriates the redeeming grace of God.

Ear hath not heard.—The Greeks were almost as proud of their ears as they were of their eyes. They were great in the art of critical listening. 'For all the Athenians, and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear something new.' This is the philosophic ear, the trained discernment which listens to doctrines, to teachings, as though by the very ear their worth and value could be assayed. So that the ear is just the symbol of philosophic equipment, the keen, mental appetite which separates teaching from teaching, disentangling their elemental fibres and arranging them in final analysis and judgment. And yet ear hath not heard 'the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.' We could stand on Mars Hill from sunrise to sunset, listening and listening to philosophic disquisitions on the Christian faith, but we might remain absolute outsiders concerning the secret treasures of God's love.

Neither hath entered into the heart of man.—There we touch a deeper discernment, deeper than either artistic sense or philosophic insight. We are in the realm of poetic vision and imagination. We pass from the artist and the philosopher to the poet. And here again the Greeks were greatly distinguished for their men of strong and soaring wing. We are still living in the wealth of their bequests, and we still find delight in the wonderful melody of their songs and in the splendour of their dreams. What doors the poets open for us! We accompany a poet along a dreary, weary, rutty road, and it becomes a highway to a city of golden dreams. Yes, the poet is laden with extraordinary gifts; and poetic power, the creative heart-power of vision and dream, is of inestimable worth. And yet even the heart of the poet has not entered into the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. Poetic gift and poetic discernment will not of themselves lead us into the amazing wonders of redeeming grace.

¶ Jowett says, 'I received a letter from a young friend who had gone far astray from home and God. His life had fallen into misery and despondency. Years ago he threw away his crown and deserted his Lord. The letter that came to me was very brief, written in the ecstasy of a wonderful day: "My dear Jowett —Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven!"'[1]

There is a spiritual faculty given to men which makes them wiser in the things of the spirit than all which the wisdom of this world knows, and which the merest child in faith may feel and know.

Take St Paul as he stands chained before Agrippa, or Festus, or Felix, and flings out, in face of all their splendour, his proud, pathetic challenge, 'I would that ye were altogether such as I am, except these bonds.' Life meant for these men sensual pleasures, pompous shows, command of money, power and ambition—cups most of which St Paul had tasted. He knew the quality of them, knew the measure of satisfaction they would yield. And he had stepped up from this to a higher platform, to a life in which the pleasures of the senses were pushed out by mightier joys; to a life in which enthusiasm, hope, love, great aims, the friendship of God and fellowship with Christ, were supreme. He was quite sure that life meant more and deeper and nobler things to him than had ever entered their hearts to conceive.

Could he ever forget God's unspeakable gift of forgiveness, and the change it had made in his life. That was one of the treasures of His grace—one of the things that God had prepared for him which eye had not seen nor ear heard. Nor could the Apostle forget the wonder of Divine guidance. Take a word like this: 'We essayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered us not.' That gentle, spiritual pressure, indicating Divine guidance and direction. That secret pressure in the inner life which the Friends call 'a stop in the mind.' The Apostle's life abounds in this intimate sense of Divine leadership, and he moves everywhere under the Divine enlightenment and control of God.

¶ In looking back over the seventy years of my life, I find the one unmistakable and persistent factor in it has been the presence of God. There have been no miracles in my life; only it has itself been a miracle. I have had few extraordinary experiences; but the experience as a whole has been such as fills me with wonder. I cherish the belief that most people have had my experience, or something like it. I am almost sure that everyone might have it, and was even meant to have it.[2]

[1] J. H. Jowett, in *The Christian World*, April 20, 1916.
[2] R. F. Horton, *The Capacity for God*.

But it is simply impossible for the secrets of the Christian life to be revealed to those who have no Christian beliefs and sentiments. People say: 'Your joys are imaginary, your perceptions of God are self-delusions, your consciousness of forgiveness and your assurance of guidance are your own creations; they are things which we do not feel, and do not understand, and do not believe.' It would be a wonderful thing if they did understand what they have never seen or felt.

¶ The story of the X-rays suggests this truth, that new conditions may give visibility to the unseen. If we take a coin and place it in a closed book, it immediately becomes invisible. But shut out the light by which we usually see, bring into requisition the electric coil, the Crooke's tube, the fluorescent plate, and immediately the book becomes transparent, and the dark shadow of the coin appears upon the sensitive film. The bullet that found its billet can now be accurately located, and easily extracted without the experimental probing of the wound. And what were the new conditions which rendered visible that which before could not be seen? They were two.

In the first place, there was the operation of a new force, what has not inaptly been called the 'new light.' And yet it is not new. Nothing in nature is new. The Röntgen rays are as old as the oldest of the suns. They have been streaming throughout creation since 'the beginning.' Men are seeing to-day what before they failed to perceive, not because there was no light, but because the light had never before fallen upon them.

But the other condition of enlightenment is no less necessary. There must not only be the presence of a new power, but the imparting of a new sense. One day, while Röntgen was conducting his experiments in the dark-room, it happened that a sensitive plate was lying near, within reach of the invisible rays, the existence of which had formerly only been guessed at. The professor observed some strange marks on the sensitive plate. Working upon this initial find, he was able, after much anxious experiment, to prepare plates entirely sensitive to the rays. The fluorescent plate glows with a brilliancy produced by a light which eye hath not seen, a light which lies somewhere outside of the spectrum, away from the ordinary vision of mankind.

These rays, the marvellous potency of which has been so recently discovered, have fallen for countless millenniums on every conceivable variety of substance; but not till the surface of that sheet of glass was suitably prepared, properly sensitized, did the image of the unseen appear.

Spiritual illumination is no new thing in the world, but God's light shines in vain upon a man if he be not prepared to receive it. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' [1]

It is to those who love that God makes His presence felt. To them He makes known the height and depth and breadth of His own tenderness and everlasting loving-kindness. In their hearts He breathes peace, courage, cheerfulness, and fullness of joy. They alone understand how much of heaven this earthly life can bring. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, but God reveals them by His Spirit to them that love Him.

The Hope of Immortality

1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.—'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.'

THERE is no subject, connected with religion, which occupies people's thoughts more frequently than the Christian hope of immortality. There is no subject on which more difficulties are felt, and none, perhaps, on which we are so reluctant to put our difficulties into words.

It is to be feared that the hope of a future life is, for many Christians, a topic of pious consolation kept in reserve for times of trouble rather than a matter of clear faith, an abiding conviction and a constant motive of action. This is not as it should be. If immortality is true at certain times, it is true always: if it is true as a consolation to the mourner, it should be present as an incentive and a warning to the worker in his daily life.

Many problems arise in any consideration of this subject, but we must confine ourselves to the fundamental question: What kind of knowledge can we expect to arrive at in such a great matter as this?

[1] J. Pollock, *The Farther Horizon*, 245.

1. The Christian hope of immortality—the everlasting life of which Jesus Christ has opened to us the gates—is part of our religion. That is the great thing to remember. If we wish for another life because we enjoy being alive, and wish to go on enjoying ourselves, that has nothing to do with religion. If we wish for another life because we are miserable, and hope for better luck in another world, that has nothing to do with religion. If we wish for another life because we have made certain investments in good works here, for which we hope, in the words of our hymn, to be 'repaid a thousandfold,' that has no more to do with religion than if we risked our money on the faith of one of the similarly worded circulars which we find on the breakfast table. The wish is so often father to the thought that any of these desires may make us believe in a future life, but our belief in that case would not be a religious belief.

¶ The argument for immortality from the mere desire of it is of course a very dangerous one. Young, the author of the *Night Thoughts*, puts it in a bald form,

Who wishes life immortal, proves it too.

That is absurd; and the fallacy has been mercilessly exposed by Hume and Huxley. Our wishes cannot make or alter the facts. We must not try to alter the multiplication table because we are getting into debt.[1]

Religion is the confident belief of the human spirit that the laws of the universe, when fully understood, will be found to do justice to all its own highest activities and aspirations. This involves the belief that all real values will be preserved for ever. Religion springs from the very depths of our undivided personality. From our inmost hearts rises the claim, the confident belief and trust, that, however appearances may seem to favour the contrary opinion, the order of the world must be rational, because God has endowed us with reason; the order of the world must be just, because we are endowed with a conscience to distinguish right and wrong; the order of the world must be merciful, because Christ has taught us to love and pity. The eternal principles of reason, of righteousness, and of love, which God has set in our hearts, carry with them the evidence of their own indestructibility, their own invincible supremacy. It is inconceivable that the mechanical order can have power to quench, subdue, or stultify, any of these mighty and Divine principles. No: come what may, the supreme Power must be rational, the supreme Power must be just, the supreme Power must be loving. Thus much of the nature and purposes of God we know, by the Spirit of God which dwelleth in us.

This is what is meant by a religious truth. It is a truth which is affirmed not only by the intellect; nor only by the conscience; nor only by the emotions and affections—but by all three, or rather by the personality which underlies all three.

2. If this is clear so far, we shall be prepared for the next step—that religious truth cannot find an adequate expression. It can only be expressed in symbols, metaphors, parables. We can do it in three ways.

(1) We can think of *a place*—a glorious city of God, a heavenly Jerusalem, a sweet and blessed country, the home of God's elect. We can fill up this picture with all the joys and glories which we can imagine—streets ablaze with gold and jewels, if we have these Jewish tastes; the company of our lost dear ones, smiling angel faces whom we have loved long since; all the spirits of just men made perfect, and of the holy angels; glorious services of praise offered before the very throne of God. There will be no pain, a pause to the weary ache and a calm to the throbbing nerves. 'No death,' nor any weary watching of the dying. 'No night.' There will be no need of night, for when the dayspring dawns all will be always strong for good, and eyes will not grow heavy for sleep. 'No sin,' for there shall be no temptation, and conscience no more will be a torment. This is the picture which appeals most to the affections and emotions.

(2) Or, secondly, we may picture it under the form of *time*—of endless duration. No doubt this may be combined with that of place—that the joys of heaven are contemplated as going on for ever. But on looking closer we see that the two forms do not combine so easily as is often thought. There is no form of enjoyment which would not pall and become intolerable with endless repetition. We shall spoil our charming picture of heaven if we dwell on the thought of singing hymns every day for

[1] W. R. Inge.

millions of years! No: it is another faculty, the will, the moral sense, which claims endless continuance. It claims it because it does not desire quiet fruition, nor the endless repetition of sweet experiences, however pure. It claims scope for endless progress, for endless upward striving towards perfection.

She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky.
Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

The present and the future life are bound by the same laws: and assuredly by this law above all others, that whatever lives grows. Growth is an inalienable law of life. The popular notion that the departed soul becomes at once perfected in radiant holiness, is inconsistent with that idea of continuity. Heaven grows out of the nobleness and goodness that earth has known: the soul grows on. Let there never be a time when I can say, 'My task is done'; for my task is all I live for.

¶ Darwin put it in this way: 'If I could only go on now, with my head sixty years old, and my body twenty-five I could do something.' Only let me go on from strength to strength, delivered from failure, sloth, feebleness, and weariness in well-doing. Let my rest be unimpeded activity.

(3) There is a third way in which we can picture the perfection of the Divine Order—its *changelessness*. What is this world but the shadow of heaven—a vain show? Can we not rise above its changes and chances, and repose upon the eternal changelessness of God? If we could see everything as God sees it, should not we even now see everything very good? Is not heaven even now open to us?

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity.[1]

This is the heaven of the thinker, the contemplative, who desires to understand the world rather than to leave his mark upon it. It is also the heaven of the devout recluse, of whom it might be said that 'Prayer is all his business, all his pleasure, praise.'

Well, we shall find, if we think about it, that all these three pictures are sanctioned by our Lord in the gospel, by the Church at all times, and by our own hearts. The heaven of popular imagination is a rough and ready amalgamation of all three. These three ideas of heaven are in a sense the creations of the three parts of our complex nature. They are all figurative: and they supplement, but are partially inconsistent with each other. The blessed reality which they inadequately strive to express is vouched for by the Spirit of God which dwelleth in us. And we need not be distressed if eye and ear and heart fail to express what is, and must be, beyond our faculties.[1]

¶ Mr H. G. Wells, in one of his early books,[2] in which he imagines a visit to the moon, makes his hero attempt to describe the earth and its inhabitants to the Grand Lunar. But the account conveys nothing to the latter, and the visitor from the earth realizes that 'it is impossible to describe the phenomena of one world in the phraseology of another.'

The Depths of God

1 Cor. ii. 10.—'But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.'

'Deep things' is a very imperfect rendering of the Greek word, which is a substantive without an adjective. And if 'depths' is a little startling, yet it is better to use the more exact term, for the idea is meant to be startling. We are to think of God as a deep below deep, which no line can plumb, as an unfathomable mystery before which the infinite human mind must stand amazed and helpless.

1. *The Spirit of God alone knows the depths of God.* As a man's own spirit knows the depths of his own nature, so the Spirit of God alone knows the mysteries of the Divine nature. A man also has depths within him; within him deep cries unto deep. The growth of a child is a series of revelations, but the development of life after childhood is hardly less surprising. Sir Walter Scott was a dull and wandering

[1] Shelley, *Adonais*.

[1] W. R. Inge, *All Saints' Sermons*, 92.
[2] *The First Men in the Moon*.

mind at school, and it would be easy to name several distinguished men who showed no promise of distinction in early days. It is no uncommon thing to find an unsuspected faculty emerging even late in life. And we may believe, as George Eliot put it,

> Life itself does not express us all,
> But leaves the best, aye, and the worst too,
> Like tunes in mechanism, unexpressed.

It is not necessary to dwell on this familiar series of facts; the point is rather that there is an immense region open to self-consciousness which is absolutely closed to another observer. To ordinary acquaintances we show but the surface of our being; or perhaps now and again give them a brief glimpse into some secret chamber of our thought or feeling. Take even our best friends, with whom we have spent long hours in intimate converse, though we do not willingly keep back anything from them, how many trains of thought, how many hopes and fears, how many designs and purposes, pass through our consciousness, but are never known to them. We are to one another like ships that cross the ocean, and frequently sight each other and interchange signals; yet, what does the one ship know of the life on board another?

¶ 'There is nothing more solemn,' says Dr Alexander Maclaren, 'than that awful loneliness in which each soul of man lives. We stretch out our hands and grasp live hands; yet there is a universe between the two that are nearest and most truly one.'

In the same way the being of the Infinite is known only by the Spirit of God. When we speak of that Being as a person, we should remember that there is some presumption in applying to Him a category which suggests to us limitations; limitations which cannot apply to Him. If we say that He is a personality, we only mean that, as personality is the highest category we know, He is not less but more than personality. He is a person without the limitations which to us seem to define personality. But such a person, wellnigh inconceivable to our minds, can evidently only be really known to Himself. If I alone can know me; much more He alone can know Him. And if we are convinced of the presumption of intruding into the self-consciousness of a fellow-man, and realize that we can by no means know him as his spirit knows him, much more must we be profoundly convinced that we cannot intrude into the being of God, we can never venture to search Him or to know Him in the way that His Spirit knows Him. The self-consciousness of the Being who made the universe, even as we know it, is as far beyond our thought, as our human self-consciousness must be beyond the thought of the indistinguishable amœba, which floats in the ooze of the sea.

2. *The Spirit can be imparted to the Christian.* It is implied that the Spirit of God can be and is imparted to the Christian, so that in some limited degree that self-consciousness of God produces, or reveals, in us a knowledge of His being. We must be careful here not to lapse into the vagueness and unrealities of Pantheism. And we can avoid the danger only by clinging close to the experience of the spiritual life. St Paul is particular to say that this wisdom is only intelligible to the wise, or the full-grown, that is to say, to those in whom the Spirit has been at work. Certainly nothing could be more meaningless than the truth with which we are now concerned to a thinker like Haeckel, who, driven by his reason to the conception of Spiritual Monism, is yet a stranger to the visitation of the Holy Spirit. The appeal then is very definitely not to the thinker as such, not to the consciousness of men unilluminated by the Holy Spirit, but to those, learned or simple, who by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ have received the Holy Ghost.

Suppose we were to take Paul as an example, we should say that his insight into the Being of God, which is the chief value of his writings, is due to the Holy Spirit within him. But better still, as Christians let us examine our own consciousness. What is it that occurs when by faith in Christ Jesus we receive the Holy Spirit? We can only say that we are introduced into the being and the life of God. We are conscious of His currents pulsing through us. God is no longer a mere supposition, required by our reason in the explanation of the universe; He is no longer a mere Lawgiver brought in from without to explain and to justify the authority of conscience or of the moral law; God is now an experience.

Whatever may evade our observation—and we are aware all the time that God is not only beyond our senses, but beyond our thought

and imagination—of one thing we are quite certain, that He is, and that we are in Him. That He is light is a fact of precisely the same certitude as the report which sight gives of the sun; that He is life is just as sure as the life we now live in the flesh; that He is Holiness is the explanation of our thought and desire of holiness; that He is love is a truth which lies now in the fact that we love.

3. *The Spirit searches for us the depths of God.* These depths of God are searched for us by the Spirit much as Hell, Purgatory and Paradise were searched for Dante by Virgil and Beatrice. No poet, not even Dante, could describe the experience. The Bible is the best record we have. But the searching of the depths will remain in this world, and may even to all eternity remain, an incompleted experience of breathless interest and untiring pursuit. If in this life there is a certain infinite in every personality which baffles the energy of the human spirit, it is reasonable to suppose that the self-consciousness of God cannot even in an Eternity of progressive evolution be passed through the finite consciousness of a creature.

We shall not venture to do more than enumerate a few of these unfathomable Depths of God. There is, to begin with, the depth of the Divine nature, which is revealed by the incarnation of the Eternal Son, and the deep beyond the deep which is revealed by His suffering on the Cross for us men and for our redemption. In referring to this abyss of Divinity, an Apostle says: 'Which things angels desire to look into.' Can it mean that the Incarnation and the Cross were a revelation even to the blessed spirits around the throne? It probably does. For it is more than probable that the depth of God unveiled in the life and death of Christ, is of such a kind that men for the most part are hardly sufficiently developed to understand it. Guided by the Spirit, we discover that the incarnation implies the eternal being of God as Love, a relation between Father and Son, which was before the world began and will be when the world has ended.

> The letter fails, and systems fall,
> And every symbol wanes;
> The Spirit over-brooding all
> Eternal Love remains.[1]
>
> [1] Whittier, *Our Master*.

But there is something more than this. The Cross implies that the Love which is God, is the love which goes out beyond, creating and redeeming; a love which makes men in His image, a love which will save them even by suffering and death. Is there any more that our frail human hearts can wish to know than the certainty that God is in His nature love, and that His nature goes out in love, the love of suffering and sacrifice, to save us?

This is a great deep, but there are other deeps beyond. In Romans xi. 33, Paul breaks into an exclamation as the great deeps become for a moment clear to him: 'O the depth of wealth and wisdom and knowledge of God!'

Are these not three distinct abysses which the Spirit searches and reveals? Wealth is an idea pitiably defiled by ignoble use. But there is a conception of the wealth of God which might shame us into the final destruction of Mammon. It needs investigation. Then there is a depth of wisdom, which, searched by the Spirit, reminds us of the folly, the intrinsic folly, involved in a philosophy without God. And there is a depth of knowledge, the knowledge of God, which might nerve our science to efforts more consistent and more fruitful. Led by the Spirit into that Divine knowledge we might escape the baffling inconclusiveness of scientific conclusions that tell us everything about the universe except what it exists for, and whence it sprung, everything about human affairs, except the goal which makes them intelligible, and everything about man except the things which distinctively make him man.

Then, it is by this initiation into the depths of the infinite God that we can escape the terror of the infinite universe. This world is a wilderness to a godless spirit, but what is it compared with the worlds on worlds, the inconceivable spaces which are represented by the stars at night? This awful desert of the universe can be turned into a home only by an intimacy with God who fills it. The Without of things is appalling; we recover our nerve when we find the Within, and know that we are within it.

¶ A brave little boy of four the other day laughed at people being afraid in the dark as he entered a room and searched behind the curtains to find the explanation of a suspicious sound. 'Who's afraid of the dark, he said, 'there's nothing but God in the dark.'

Spirit, nearing yon dark portal at the limit of thy human state,
Fear not thou the hidden purpose of that Power which alone is great,
Nor the myriad world, His shadow, nor the silent opener of the Gate.

It is a sublime purpose of God, having made us, finite and fragile creatures, in His image, to make us at home in His vast creation, by communicating to us His Spirit and initiating us into the self-knowledge of God.

More wonderful still is the way by which He has done it, the homely approach to us in His Son, as the man of Nazareth, and the gift of His Spirit by faith in Him.

Is it credible that a man should immerse himself in the depths of wealth and wisdom and knowledge of this world, so that, at the opening of the gate, he passes out into a boundless and homeless universe, without God, who alone gives to it the aspect of a home? [1]

Self-knowledge

1 Cor. ii. 11.—'Who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him?' (R.V.).

When we read this text superficially, we are apt to think it the Biblical form of a query, such as we have heard put, or have put ourselves, many a time in everyday affairs and everyday arguments: 'Can't you allow me to know best about what concerns myself?' Or, 'Don't you think a man is the safest judge of his own affairs?' Is a man always of necessity the best judge of his own affairs? A Napoleon dictates his recollections during that last phase on St Helena: surely he ought to have known what did take place—but the result is a subtle compound of truth and falsehood, and it would be impossible to say just where self-deception ended, and the deception of others began in this case. An eminently cool and matter-of-fact intellect like Herbert Spencer writes his autobiography in two ponderous volumes; but he leaves directions for the writing of an official Life by another hand. But this interpretation of our text, which makes it to mean that man knows best about what concerns himself, is really based upon a misunderstanding; it leaves out the most important word and idea in the text—the *spirit* of the man, which is in him, this it is which knoweth and understandeth the things of a man, and this spirit is just that part of him which stands over and against the material, the passionate, the sensual, the earthy, which also enter into his composition. It is, at the lowest, the clear intelligence, free from the urgencies of bodily appetite; it is, at the highest, that part of man which links him directly to God, his spiritual nature, that which the old writer means when he says that the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord. In that light, provided it burns with a steady flame, we can know ourselves, we can judge ourselves aright, and in no other.

According to Tennyson self-knowledge is one of the Three Secrets of Sovereign Power.

Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead on to sovereign power.

Self-knowledge, then, is an indispensable condition of power—the power to strive after what is worthy and enduring, and so to rise to a level of inner poise and serenity beyond the world's power to disturb. We find St Augustine summing up all prayer in the aspiration 'May I know Thee, Lord, may I know myself.' This emphasis upon the importance of self-knowledge does not in the least arise from self-conceit; only our self is the medium through which we inevitably envisage and form our ideas of all the rest, and if our knowledge of ourselves is amiss or seriously defective, we shall be viewing the whole world through a distorting medium, and all our sight will be vitiated. If we misunderstand even ourselves, how can we hope to understand others, or the great world!

1. Let us have a knowledge of *our limitations*. This is one of the most necessary forms of self-knowledge. A certain self-confidence, a rather jolly over-estimation of our capacities and talents is perhaps inseparable from youth, and in the providence of God serves a useful purpose. One would much sooner have to deal with a young fellow who gave us to understand that he was aiming for the top of the tree, and meant to get there, than with some spiritless cypher who was quite content to be a cypher all his days. Life will presently take the former of the two in hand, and show him that if he wants

[1] R. F. Horton, *The Trinity*, 21.

to 'make good,' as the Americans say, it will have to be done by sheer indomitable effort. But the fact is that we almost all, at the opening of our careers, absurdly overrate our talents. We complain of our narrow spheres and opportunities, when the plain truth is that if we had the abilities we think ourselves possessed of, the spheres would widen almost automatically, yielding to the pressure we were exerting. Let us then realize that all real mastery, all real power, springs from a pretty accurate knowledge of our limitations; we have to find out what we can't do before we discover what we can do, and develop along those lines.

¶ Among all the persons in Leipzig who influenced him Goethe gave the first place to Friedrich Oeser, director of the Academy of Drawing in the city. In a letter to Oeser, written from Frankfort, he says: 'You know what I was when I came to you, and what when I left you: the difference is your work . . . you have taught me to be modest without self-depreciation, and to be proud without presumption.' And elsewhere he declares that the great lesson he had learned from Oeser was that the ideal of beauty is to be found in 'simplicity and repose.' But the main interest of Goethe's intercourse with Oeser in connection with his general development is that it strengthened an illusion from which he did not succeed in freeing himself till near his fortieth year—the illusion that nature had given him equally the gifts of the painter and the poet. Many hours of the best years of his life were to be spent in laboriously practising an art in which he was doomed to mediocrity; and it must remain a riddle that one, who like Goethe was so curiously studious of his own self-development, should so long and so blindly have misunderstood his own gifts.[1]

2. Let us have a knowledge of *our weaknesses.* This is another condition of power, just as the secret of many a fall is our obstinate disinclination to own those weaknesses even to ourselves, the efforts we make to ignore them, to hide them from our consciousness. If there is one prayer our hearts decline to frame, it is the Psalmist's, 'Lord, let me know how frail I am'; but the Psalmist, in uttering this particular petition, was wiser than we. We find the same meaning in that astounding paradox of the Apostle Paul. 'For when I am weak,' when I know how frail I am, 'then am I strong.' Far better be frank with ourselves, acknowledge when our defences need strengthening, and act accordingly. When we drop pretence and cease fencing with reality, we know well enough, every man and woman amongst us, what are the dangers we need to guard specially against, what are the temptations to which we are constitutionally liable to succumb; and once we look those facts in the face, we can frame a course for our self-protection. You will remember that very old story of the various applicants for the post of coachman, each of whom was asked how near he could drive to the edge of a steep quarry, and how they outbade each other in boasts of their skill and venturesomeness, till one of them said quite simply, 'Well, for my part, sir, I'd keep as far away from the edge as I could'—and that was the man who got the post. We need not try how near we can drive to the edge; we have too precious a cargo to take unnecessary risks—an immortal soul, committed to us by God—and our one business is to deliver it safe into the Owner's hands at the end of the journey.

3. Let us have a knowledge of *our wants.* This is not a knowledge of the hundred and one things that take our passing fancy, but of our real wants—our needs. One and all of us, we want whatever aid we can get to character-building—whatever will contribute to that great end. We are set here by God with so much raw material from which to select, and out of which to shape a moral habitation for the soul, a character. In order to discharge our task successfully, we must make up our minds to meet, not shirk, our difficulties; to put forth loyal and sustained effort, and to accept life's discipline without murmuring or whining. The training of our faculties for service, and keeping under of unruly cravings and self-will—all this means the storing-up of power to effect what will be worth doing, and without such discipline the power we might have wielded will be dissipated and spend itself in space. With chisel and mallet the sculptor chips and carves his block of marble, ere out of the shapeless mass there emerges some figure of heroic proportions or divine beauty; so life, the sculptor, has to shape and fashion and discipline us before there can emerge the noble

[1] P. H. Brown, *The Youth of Goethe*, 45.

shape of a fine character. And towering above all the rest stands One of Godlike mien and perfection; and as we bend our gaze upon Him, the Author of our salvation, we see the mark of the nails, and remember that even He was made 'perfect through suffering.'

Then, among the wants of which we need to grow more conscious is the want of what will aid and stimulate the life of the mind. In our modern life with its rush of commercialism and its rather metallic standards, this is a warning which is needed. Hand in hand with a rather ruthless pursuit of business aims there always goes a tendency to seek relaxation in the more frivolous and brainless sort of pastimes, and the mind has a poor time of it. If we wish to have an accurate index or symptom of a general phenomenon, think of the kind of plays that are presented in most of our theatres week-in and week-out. Silly and ever sillier musical comedies; suggestive and ever more suggestive farces; crude and ever cruder melodramas—these form the staple fare, and it represents what the public evidently wants. Let us resolve to find a little more time for the furnishing and improvement of the mind, for gathering some of the true and unfading riches. Knowledge is power, and in proportion as we know more of the world and its store of wonders, we can be more, and be worth more, to society, to ourselves, and to God.

4. Let us have a knowledge of *our possibilities*. The self-knowledge which is to lead us on to sovereign power will certainly include a far better knowledge of our possibilities. Our selves are large unexplored estates which it is our business to develop and raise a harvest from. This estate of self is worth exploring; and, since it is all we can count our own, what a pity to go through life in partial ignorance of what is ours, of what we might be if we deemed it worth while to find out! There are finer possibilities of self-devotion, heroism, tenderness, courage, magnanimity in you than you ever imagined; but your best is not necessarily on the surface.

¶ There is a well-known poem by Matthew Arnold entitled *The Buried Life*—a poem full of haunting music and rare introspective power. It is a picture of many a soul, and it is not difficult to fill in from experience the outline which it supplies. We all have the power of living so completely upon the surface of our souls as to be ignorant of what is hidden in their depths. It is, indeed, a large part of the pathos and tragedy of life that we are so disobedient to the oracle which bids us know ourselves. We either do not care for self-knowledge, or imagine we have it in such abundance that we can swear by it at times—'as well as I know myself!' But there are moments when we have glimpses of what we are and may be, of hitherto unknown capacities and powers, and from beneath our conscious life there rise the murmuring voices of a deeper—a buried life.

Yet still, from time to time, vague and forlorn,
From the soul's subterranean depth upborne
As from an infinitely distant land,
Come airs, and floating echoes, and convey
A melancholy into all our day.
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.
The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain.[1]

5. Let us have a knowledge of *ourselves as children of God*. In this consciousness and in this alone there is security and peace, and quenchless hope; for having this we can link our very feebleness to His almighty power when our own fails, and so be enabled to prevail. We can then say, 'I can do all things, through him that strengtheneth me.' A few years ago an ancient manuscript of alleged sayings of Jesus was discovered in Upper Egypt, one of which ran:—'Know yourselves, and ye shall be aware that ye are sons of the Father.' It may or may not be an authentic utterance of our Lord's, but it is true. Not until we realize our relation to God as His children, do we know ourselves, and this knowledge is ministered to us by the Son of God in whose face we have read the secret of the Divine Fatherhood.

Experience in Christian Thinking

1 Cor. ii. 14.—'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.'

THE natural man, that is to say the unregenerate man, is unable, Paul says, to receive the

[1] J. Hunter, *De Profundis Clamavi*, 3.

things of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned. It is not the merely clever man, but the man who has felt the power of spiritual forces who is competent to deal with spiritual issues. The judge of religious truth is not the critic, but the saint.

Now what are we to make of the principle the Apostle here lays down? Does it amount to a repudiation of reason in the realm of religion? Is it a denial of the rights of the intellect? By no means. The Christian faith appeals to men as reasonable and intelligent beings. This is the challenge it addresses to them: 'Come and let us reason together, saith the Lord.' It courts investigation; it welcomes inquiry. It calls upon men to serve and love God not only with the heart and the soul, but with the mind as well. Paul himself brought a mighty brain to bear upon Christian truth. He is par excellence the thinker of the Apostolic group. He would be the last in the world to challenge the function of the reason or to deny the rights of the intellect. On the contrary, he commends the Christian faith and the Christian service on the ground that it is essentially a reasonable service. This is not a denial of the rights of the intellect; it is not an assertion that the reason has no part to play in religion. But it is the assertion that reason by itself is not enough, that something more than a keen and clever intellect is necessary for the discernment of religious truth. And there is nothing unreasonable in the Apostolic contention. He is really only laying down a principle the reasonableness and, indeed, necessity of which are freely acknowledged in other spheres of human learning.

As a matter of fact, there is very little of our knowledge that has come to us as the result of mere and pure reason. Emotional and moral factors are called into play as well. To appreciate painting, for instance, we need much more than a clear eye and the power to distinguish colours. We need more than a brain. We need a certain moral and spiritual gift: we need sympathy with the painter's mind and purpose.

¶ I remember when in Venice seeing an American gentleman, sitting in a room which contained Titian's glorious 'Annunciation,' listlessly turning over the leaves of his catalogue, and looking the very picture of weariness and boredom. And I overheard his wife say to him: 'Come along, John, to room so-and-so; there's something besides saints there.' [1]

¶ Archbishop Benson tells this incident in his own life: 'When I was a boy at school, I was under Prince Lee—that prince of schoolmasters. And one day he said to his class, "Next time you have an opportunity, go to the British Museum and sit before the famous statue there, the torso of Jupiter, by Pheidias. Stay there in front of it until you find out what it has to say to you, even if you wait for hours." Twice,' said the Archbishop, 'I went. The first time I came away, feeling vaguely that there was something which had to come to me as yet, but which would still break through. The second time, after looking at it for three-quarters of an hour, I saw what my headmaster meant. It is not easy to describe; I can only say that it seemed to me that, apart from the statue itself, I saw there enshrined in it the spirit of perfect beauty; and from that day to this I have looked for that spirit and have found it again and again; it has helped me to see and to appraise beauty in all the pictures and statues that I have looked at.' [2]

To appreciate music we need more than an accurate ear; we need a little of the musical temperament. There are plenty of keen, clever men to whom music of all kinds is an intolerable weariness. To appreciate poetry we need more than the power to read; we need that curious, subtle feeling for the harmonies and cadences of words. Or (to take an illustration on a rather different plane) to understand men we need more than a clear head; we need also a sympathetic heart. The power to read human nature, as we say, comes not so much through our intellectual faculties as through our emotional and moral qualities of insight, sympathy, sensibility.

¶ When it became known that Mr John Morley (as he then was) had undertaken to write the life of Mr Gladstone, men questioned whether he had all the qualifications necessary to make him a successful biographer. For the deepest and profoundest thing in Mr Gladstone, the real secret of his life, was his religion, and Mr Morley, it was understood, was not in sympathy with Mr Gladstone in the matter of religion. And though we may think that in

[1] J. D. Jones.
[2] G. H. Aitken, *Fellow-Workers with God*, 100.

the actual result that difficulty was largely overcome, yet the feeling that prompted the criticism was perfectly sound and just.

It is this same principle that Paul is applying here to the matter of Christian truth. It comes to men, not through the mind only, but through the heart, the emotions, and the will as well. And to understand Christian truth you need more than intellectual cleverness; you need moral sympathy with the truth you seek to grasp; you need the Christian spirit; 'these things are spiritually tested.' The only difference is that, if this principle holds good in other spheres of human knowledge, it holds with tenfold validity in the apprehension of Christian truth. For Christianity is not a theory, it is not a set of maxims, it is not even a body of truth; it is a personal relation, it is an obedience, it is a life. Christianity, at bottom, is life in Christ.

1. *Experience and Doctrine.*—It is important to recognize that in the Christian religion experience precedes doctrine. There is a certain body of doctrine which we recognize to-day as being the intellectual statement of the truth of Christianity. But, as a matter of history, Christianity did not begin as a set of doctrines; it began as a vital experience in the hearts of men. Experience came first, dogma came second. It was not the Christian doctrine that gave rise to the Christian experience; it was the Christian experience that gave rise to the Christian dogma. Men felt certain things, and then they felt constrained to try to give an intellectual account of them. Take the cardinal doctrine of the Incarnation. The Apostles did not start with the doctrine. But Jesus Christ produced a certain impression upon them, and accomplished certain works in them, and coming to account for that impression, and those mighty and revolutionary works, they explained them by saying that Jesus was no mere man, but God manifest in the flesh. Take Paul's doctrine of Atonement. It was drawn out of the blood and fire of his own experience. The crushing burden of sin, the ineffectiveness of law, the redeeming and life-giving power of the crucified Christ—they were vital experiences with Paul before they were translated into doctrines. His doctrine of release through the atoning sacrifice of Christ is simply the attempt to give intellectual expression to what he had already experienced. Now if that be the true order, it follows that for the true appreciation of these great Christian doctrines an identity of experience, a sympathy of spirit is required.

2. *Experience and Knowledge.*—If Christian truth were purely intellectual, like the multiplication table or the problems of Euclid, the intellect would be sufficient for its apprehension. But Christian doctrine is simply Christian experience translated into speech. To understand and appreciate the speech into which it is translated you must first of all have some sympathy with and some share in the experience. Take the great and cardinal doctrines to which reference has been made.

(1) Take first the *doctrine of the Incarnation.* The Gnostics in John's day challenged this doctrine. They denied that the infinite God could express Himself in a finite personality. They scouted the bare idea that God could become manifest in the flesh. It was not the least bit surprising that they should do so. From the merely intellectual point of view the doctrine seemed impossible and absurd. But to John and the Christians at Ephesus it was not impossible, and it was not absurd. They had felt and seen and handled the Word of Life. They had come into direct contact with Jesus; He had exercised God's power upon them and done God's work within them. The Incarnation to them was not an impossible thing; it was a sure and certain thing. Their conviction sprang from their experience. They had an anointing from the Holy One, and they knew.

(2) Take next the great *doctrine of the Cross,* with which Paul is dealing in this chapter. To the natural man it was mere foolishness. This is nothing to be surprised at. The natural man cannot know this great truth. The man who has never felt broken and crushed by his sin will never understand it. He does not realize the need of forgiveness, and so the whole idea of an atoning sacrifice becomes to him a ridiculous superfluity. But the man who has passed through Paul's experience finds no difficulty about Paul's doctrine. The man whose heart has been broken by his sin appreciates the Cross, understands the Cross. To the wise and prudent it seems a superfluity. To the penitent soul it is God's answer to his

urgent and bitter need, and a great multitude of sin-burdened men and women have found in it their hope and comfort.

Now all this has a very vital bearing upon our Christian apologetic. Clever men are once again denying the Incarnation and scouting the Atonement. We need not be unduly alarmed. To the natural man, however keen and clever, these great Christian doctrines seem absurd, and he tells us so loudly and continually. But how is a man to know who and what Christ is if he has never put himself in Christ's hands? How is a man to know whether the Cross is the power and wisdom of God or not if he has never felt the ache and burden of his own sin? These things are spiritually tested, and a man who has no experimental knowledge of Christ, and who has never felt the sinfulness of sin, is as incompetent to pronounce judgment upon the Incarnation or the Atonement as a blind man would be to pronounce judgment on colour or a deaf man on sound.

As Middleton Murry expresses it in his *Life of Jesus*, 'To understand the teaching of the Kingdom, a man must already be of the Kingdom.' So in these troublous days, over against the denials and negations of the critics we set the experience of the saints. And about the witness of the saints there is neither hesitation nor doubt. They know that Jesus is the Son of God, for they have felt His power in their lives. They know the Cross is a redeeming sacrifice, for it has brought redemption and life to them. And not only is this the experience of the saints of to-day; it has been the experience of the saints all down the centuries.

¶ There is a striking passage in one of James Smetham's *Letters* in which, after speaking of his own experience—'inwardly as great and as simple a fact as the facts of seeing and hearing'—he goes on to say, 'And I have met with such scores and hundreds who strike hands with me in life and death on these great matters that it is settled "without controversy" to me.'[1]

It does not trouble us very much that the mere critic sees nothing in these great doctrines. The faith is secure, because multitudes by experience have found them true. The saint—the man who has tried—the man who has made experiment—is the only competent judge of Christian truth.

[1] G. Jackson, *The Guests of God*, 149.

O God! the pure alone,—
E'en in their deep confessing,—
Can see thee as their own,
And find the perfect blessing;
Yet to each waiting soul
Speak in thy still, small voice,
Till broken love's made whole,
And saddened hearts rejoice.[1]

[1] J. Martineau.

The Mind of Christ

1 Cor. ii. 16.—'But we have the mind of Christ.'

If we turn to the context of the text we find that mention is made of three kinds of mind. There is, first, the carnal mind, swayed by passion and prejudice, to which Divine things are foolish and unreal—like Caliban upon Setebos. Then there is a higher mind, described in our version as a 'natural mind.' The exact word used is 'psychical,' but as that word is now employed it may easily mislead us as to the meaning of St Paul. If we use the word 'intellectual' we are not far from his meaning, and, oddly enough, he anticipated much of the thought of our own day. On the first page of his *Creative Evolution* Bergson tells us that the intellect 'is an appendage to the faculty of action'; and, later, that it has 'a natural inability to comprehend life.' So also Kant, who held that Pure Reason alone cannot know reality, but only appearance. These thinkers do not mean to belittle intellect, but simply to indicate, in different ways, its limits. They agree that we cannot know living reality by simply thinking about it, still less by watching it and analysing it. We must be in it and of it, must enter into it by intuitive sympathy, and know it, as Bergson says, 'after the fashion of one who loves.' The tragedy of Hamlet was not the creation of Pure Reason, but of swift and vivid artistic insight; and no doubt that haunting figure was as much a wonder to Shakespeare as he is to us. Nor was it by intellect alone that St Paul wrote his Hymn of Love, all-believing, all-enduring. So far the Apostle and the philosophers agree, but here their ways part. Kant saved the day by appeal to the Practical Reason, and Bergson to the

Intuitive Mind, whereas St Paul appeals to a higher mind which he calls the Spiritual. Instead of defining it, the Apostle shows what it is by a concrete example: it is the mind of Christ.

Let us try to answer three questions: What is the Mind of Christ? What did St Paul mean when he said we have the Mind of Christ? How can we make the Mind of Christ our own?

1. *What is the Mind of Christ?*—When we speak of the mind of Shakespeare, of Raphael, of Lincoln, of Edison, we mean something more than mental traits and the glitter of genius. Each of those names stands for a way of thinking, a point of view, an insight unique, definite, distinct, and for ever precious to our race. So much is this true, that if we pick up an old play which Shakespeare re-wrote, we can tell almost infallibly each line that he altered or added. Wherever his pen touched the page we can feel the quality of his spirit, his strength, his sanity, his forgiving pity. Anyone who has studied Lincoln, read his words, followed his footsteps, and learned his spirit, can tell—not in detail, perhaps, but in a very real way—what he would think on almost any theme. We know his angle of vision, his justice, his veracity, his relentless logic, his limitless charity.

Just so, some day a great book will be written entitled *The Intellect of Jesus and the Mind of Christ*, but who is sufficient for such an undertaking? For, by the mind of Christ we mean something more than His capacity for thinking, although the depth of His mind, its vitality, its sanity, its lucid purity, no less than the sweep and grandeur of its conceptions, dazzle us. No, we mean His insight, His motive, His thought, His knowledge—the truth which His mind, His personality, His character revealed.

(1) To the mind of Christ the first truth and the last, the central, all-transfiguring, reality, was God, who is Love. From that fountain all His life flowed; in the light of that truth life yielded its meaning. Everything far and near, great and small—the crash of an empire, the fall of a sparrow—He saw in its relation to God. Nothing, in His thought, was separate from God and complete in itself; the secret of beauty in flower and sunset, in the bird that sings and the soul that aspires, is holiness, and the flower of holiness is beauty.

(2) From the vision of the holiness of beauty came His clear conviction of the hope of all lost things, and His joy in reclaiming them, at any cost, to the beauty of holiness. He believed that man, in spite of all that He saw in him of failure and ugliness and depravity and ruin, was capable of being redeemed. Christ's conception of man was that, however low he had sunk, however untrue he had been to the light, however saturated he was with the poison of vice, he was yet worth dying for. The Cross of Jesus Christ, from that standpoint if from no other, for evermore flings the light of hope across all human darkness.

¶ In one of her books Edna Lyall describes a character in this significant fashion: 'Carlo had the rare and enviable gift of seeing people as they might have been under happier circumstances, and the still rarer gift of treating them as such.'

¶ While he stayed in Shansi his thoughts dwelt much on the condition of the very poor, and on some permanent work in their behalf. 'The matter which weighs on me most heavily,' he writes, 'is the question of what to do for the lost of Chinese society. These people are the very class Jesus would seek out to save, though I am not sure that the publicans and sinners were quite so low in the social scale as the "lost" I speak of. I have sometimes thought I might or ought to give my whole time to do something for these lost.' [1]

Whatever else may grow dim, whatever may be broken or lost, the vision of God in Christ remains the everlasting treasure of humanity—its test of truth, its standard of values, its ideal of judgment. It rebukes pessimism. It evokes adoration. It lights up the universe like a sunrise, showing us the meaning and the worth of the life of man. Wherever it is trusted and followed, it has proved itself the fountain of light and hope and beauty of character, making our fleeting mortal day 'a many-splendoured thing,' and death a 'light-fringed' mystery.

2. *What did St Paul mean when he said that we have the Mind of Christ?*—He must have meant not only that we possess it as a treasure, but that we are able to share it, although not one of us, or all of us together, can contain it. Our chalice soon overflows, and the sea is still full. In every Christ-anointed mind we find some quality of the mind of Christ—in St Francis his gaiety, in Molinos his serenity, in Woolman

[1] J. E. Hellier, *Life of David Hill*, 140.

his pity, in Drummond his courtesy—but it is only in the fellowship of myriad minds that the wonder is revealed. If we are to know the truth as it is in Jesus, we can only know it together, each sharing the vision of all.

Here lie the secret of Christian unity and the seat of authority in faith. Not what the dogmatists argue, but what the humblest soul learns of the mind of Christ, is what matters most. Our real unity is not an argument, but a fellowship in which the resources of the higher mind are revealed and the deep things of God are disclosed. Let the Church seek to know the mind of Christ, and to be guided by it, and its discords will be healed, and its unity in variety unveiled in the beauty of holiness. There are thousands of saints in every communion, and some outside the border of all our systems—faithful souls, humble and unknown to fame—who show in their lives 'the lineaments of gospel books.' They are the proof of faith and the salt of the earth. By as much as we live and think in the mind of Christ, by so much do we find the centre where all strands of truth are woven into one seamless robe of light.

3. *How can we make the Mind of Christ our own?*—If we wish to take the mind of Shakespeare into our own, to the measure of our power, we read his plays, study his age and his art, and live with him until we think as he thought and see life as he saw it. When we love a father, a mother, a friend, we admit them into our hearts, and make their spirit our own. Thus Monica lived in Augustine until, at last, her purity by the grace of God disinfected him of his sensualism and saved him from the pit. Carlyle, in his *Reminiscences*, tells us that the life of his father was the sunken pillar on which his own life stood, and to the very end he felt the heart of his mother beating in his own.

The process is the same in respect to the mind of Christ. If we are to have the mind of Christ we must live with Him, love Him, obey Him, must study His words, brood over His life, that we may come to think of God, of man, of life, as He did—trusting God with His trust, loving our fellow-men with His love, and looking upon life with His still, clear vision. So St Paul lived, making it the mark of the prize of his high endeavour, until at last he could say: 'It is no longer I that live, but Christ who liveth in me.'

¶ In the early part of the seventeenth century there lived in the city of Seville in Spain a youth who was fired with ambition to be an artist. He became the pupil of Murillo. In his studio he surrendered himself with complete abandon to the master's teaching. Through long years of study and application he sought to enter into the secrets of the craft. He did this with such success that at length the mind that was in his master was also in him. The public came to recognize him as a worthy disciple and perpetuator of the spirit of his master's art. In recognition of this fact he was asked at Murillo's death to complete some of his master's unfinished works. Many of his pictures can be distinguished from those of Murillo himself only with the greatest difficulty. One of these hangs among the pictures in the Gallery of Sacred Art at Hennepin Avenue Church, Minneapolis. For a long time it was mistaken for a Murillo. Only the most careful critics discovered that it is the work of Francisco Menesses, this devoted pupil, in whom the mind of the master dwelt with such completeness.[1]

¶ In the *Idylls of the King* there is the story of the young knight and his meeting with the Holy Nun. Tennyson says:

> And as she spake
> She sent the deathless passion in her eyes
> Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind
> On him, and he believed in her belief.

How can we share such an experience?

(1) First of all, here is the Book of life, aglow with His presence, instinct with the atmosphere of His personality, and ineffably rich with His wisdom and faith. How much time have we given to the study of the ways and words of Jesus? Have we given Jesus a chance to teach us His truth? Here, in a book of immortal loveliness, is His very soul—'He Himself with His human air'—and to know Him in the days of His flesh is the first approach to His mind.

(2) To-day, as in the past, the promise stands true, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' The capacity for religion is a native endowment of man, but its culture, its high truths, are realized only in fellowship. Every

[1] L. H. Bugbee, *Christ To-day*, 40.

great, creative movement in Christian history began first in the fellowship of a little group, and then spread to the multitude. Wesley with his band, Newman and his circle at Oxford, are examples. In the fellowship of faith, prayer, and service they sought together what none may know alone, and released in their times a new and haunting power, both for individual redemption and for social regeneration. If we really want to know the mind of Christ for the issues of our age—want it, that is, in order to obey it—we must take time for fellowship, time to weave or repair the ties of spiritual brotherhood, time to listen until we are stilled by the awe of His presence and He reveals to us His way and His will.

PERSONALITY IN SERVICE

1 Cor. iii. 6, 9.—'I did the planting, Apollos did the watering, but it was God who made the seed to grow. . . . We work together in God's service.'

A CAPTIOUS critic had objected to the famous violin-maker of Cremona that, if God wanted violins, He could make them Himself. But the artist replied, 'No, even God could not make *my* violins without Antonio Stradivari.' And the statement, bold though it be, holds good as the expression of the value of Personality in Service, whether of heaven or of earth;

> Of all who live, I am the one by whom
> This work can best be done in the right way.

Isaiah heard the call for personal service, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us,' and he answered it by a self-dedication, 'Here am I, send me.'

To the Corinthians the Apostle wrote, 'We are fellow-labourers with God, Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas, who are used by God to give you faith.' In his picture of God's building, which is the Church, Paul thinks of every man (one of his favourite expressions) doing his own part, but with a conscience for the plan of the whole, so that every separate building of many workers may be at last welded together, part to part, till it rises into the one sacred temple of the Lord (Eph. ii. 20, 21). It fits into the ideal pattern and plan; the Divine habitation in which humanity is to dwell has been fashioned by many builders, but their work, under the inspiration of the Spirit, makes the one house and home of souls.

So the great cathedral-builders of the past were content to work, each in his generation, for the far-off and perfect shrine, every man up to the inspiration of his opportunity. This one built the tower, that the chancel; one moulded the tracery of the eastern window, another rounded the dome. Thus, we can trace the individuality of the builders of every passing period. And to be their saving health God gave them the sunshine of life, His breath to breathe and His Spirit to control hand, and heart, and eye. Yet the cathedral is one in the unity of all the personalities that have toiled for it and made the wholeness of the whole. Such is the temple of God, which temple ye are.

In his glowing picture of service Paul seems to waver in a choice of metaphors. In one place he has before him, as we have seen, some age-long temple in Greek lands, which through the centuries has grown together out of many buildings; and then he turns to the illustration of the seed, so hallowed by the use of Jesus. Three personalities have worked for the harvest of souls in Corinth: Paul planted, Apollos watered, God made the seed to grow; and the one is not without the other. Even God could not make a Cremona, without Antonio Stradivari. The Church, like humanity and even the world itself, is a continuous creation in which we work together as helpers of God in the perfecting of His purpose. And what each man contributes is not any so-called external gift, but himself, his will to be the instrument of God. No doubt the offering made by successive leaders of work and thought is often imperfect, but, though we do not chalk over the dark spots, as George Eliot says about Savonarola, 'It is not therefore in vain that his mighty heart is laid on the altar of man's highest hopes.'

I

THE INFLUENCE OF GREAT PERSONALITIES

In every religion, Jewish, Indian, Christian, or Moslem, a striking personality lies behind the movement, the hero as prophet, divinity, or priest, and but for him it would not have been, or it would have been different. And when we come to the planting of Christianity in the Roman world, and the winning of the empire in its great cities, this is abundantly true. Going back to the origins, we find human factors, consecrated men, burning and shining lights. The great commercial centre of Corinth was made Christian by Paul, Apollos, and, we might add, Aquila and Priscilla, people of diverse and contrasted gifts, but all combining into the pure white light of the Christian life—personalities about whom we say, Had it not been for these! Let us consider the first two.

Paul.—Of all the human agents that have moulded the world's faith, Paul stands as one apart. He was a predestined man, as his own words confess: 'It pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb to reveal his Son in me.' Concerning him it might also be said, 'There was a man sent from God whose name was Paul.' Birth, temperament, and training marked him out as an instrument of the Highest. And his intense religious experience perfected his preparation. Tradition tells us that he was nothing to look at, and the Corinthians in their petulance said that his speech was beneath contempt. Yet this was the man who evangelized Corinth. In his case, as in that of all soul-gatherers from the highest to the humblest, the dynamic behind the work is difficult to appreciate, for the last secret of personality can never be fully known. All God-honoured evangelists, pastors, and teachers, with a certain elusiveness, remind us of the word, *secretum meum mihi*—my secret is my own; perhaps in the last resort no one can give the key of his heart to another.

A French philosopher once said, 'I wish I knew where the road to Damascus was—the road where Paul met the Lord; I would go and walk there.' And we have all felt something of the same; the longing to know how Paul brought on a meeting between Corinth and Christ. There was the Divine message, but, caught up in it, sustained and enriched by it, there was the human personality upon which the current of power broke into light. What fed the undying flame was Paul's love for Christ and his love for men. He had gifts of dialectic, but the world does not remember him for these; rather—and it was part of his secret—he was a great mystic who always lived near the fire; he, as no man before or since, has shown the world the loveliness of Christ making the soul a willing captive. From this the power of religious emotion sprang up out of the deep fountains of experience. In his own words, 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control' were the instruments with which he worked. He became all things to all men in the recognition that each—even the scum of the city—was the brother for whom Christ died. Again, he took with energy his own line, though no man of his temperament, as Matthew Arnold remarks, 'insisted so often and so admirably that the lines of other workers were just as good as his own.'

At the risk of beating out again the well-threshed sheaves, we may mark here one secret of his work in the making of a Church of God in Corinth, of all places. He had a gospel which was his own—*my* gospel, he calls it—and he insisted on giving his own gospel in his own way: 'No man put it into my hands, no man taught me what it meant; I had it by revelation of Jesus Christ.' No doubt he stood on the common basis of apostolic Christianity, yet it was the old, old story, *plus* Paul. 'Look into your heart and sing' is the secret of the poet, and it was the secret of this great maker. Perhaps in Athens the Apostle had tried to play David with Saul's armour, and to talk philosophy, which he could do with any man of his time; but he dropped the experiment, and did not repeat it in Corinth. There is, of course, something in the apology which has been made for him—that new occasions teach new duties; but there is more in the thought that Paul knew his own weapons, which were mighty to the pulling down of such strongholds as the paganism of Corinth could show. He preached his own gospel, which then and now has had its unfailing appeal and its answer from the world's understanding heart—'The Son of God loved me and gave himself for me.' And this did not fail. It was his own gospel because, tried by

experience, it had answered and sufficed for himself; 'Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ.' When Sir Henry Jones was chosen to be the successor of Edward Caird in the Moral Philosophy chair at Glasgow, he was full of misgiving at succeeding his great master. And he found comfort only when it occurred to him that it was not his business to be a second Caird, but 'just to make the best I can of Henry Jones. If I can only fill my own place and put my heart's blood into my work for the young men, I think, I shall be happy.' Such also is the personality of the preacher who speaks out of a heart which can say, *I have felt* —to have his own gospel, and to give it out of an experience, and fortified by a character, which back it up.

And then Paul was always at it—'This one thing I do'; pressing right up to the height of his call, persuading men and winning them because he saw each of them in Christ. There he found the worst of them worthy to be loved. One wonders sometimes how he fought the demons of depression which, as in the case of Moses, were always pulling at his heart-strings. But he *did* fight them, right on to the end, smiling through his tears as he went his unwearied, dauntless way: 'Dying but here I am alive, chastened but not killed, grieved but always glad, poor but the means of wealth to many, without a penny, but possessed of all. O Corinthians, I am keeping nothing back from you; my heart is wide open for you;' sowing the seed here and there—in the tent-maker's workroom, in the crowded city square, in the lecture-room of the philosopher, and in many a quiet talk till the stars came out. As the little child said, 'God must have known what He was doing, when He made a man like that.' His was the influence of an overflowing and rich life—unique, no doubt, but every personality is unique as it comes fresh from the Creator's hand, and is born again into the love of Christ. Who can fathom the secret of a successful ministry? In this instance we have not tried, but we say that it was a man with the words we have quoted in his mind, and the Immortal Song of Love (1 Cor. xiii.) in his heart, who turned the scum of the city into the light of the world; the personality whose boast it was—'I did the planting.'

Apollos.—Apollos did the watering. Dr Whyte has observed that 'Paul so eclipses every one of his contemporaries, that it is with the utmost difficulty we can get a glimpse of any one but Paul.' But God fulfils Himself in many ways, and surely the personality of the other man who (against his will) was Paul's rival in the affections of the Corinthian Church has its own distinct place. And the Apostle himself, that Greatheart of generosity, is not so unmindful of his fellow-workers as his historians from Luke downwards have been. In magnanimity he recognizes all the helpers, and, in particular, concerning the religious harvest at Corinth, he gratefully acknowledges that 'Apollos did the watering.'

This coadjutor of the great Missioner is therefore interesting for his own lovable personality. He was a native of Alexandria, the traditional home of eloquence and learning, and seems to have belonged at first to the dwindling party which carried on the tradition of John the Baptist. For long he had been a 'Christian in some sense,' but it was in Ephesus, through the friendly nurture of Aquila and Priscilla, that he entered into the fullness of the faith; he is therefore an apt illustration of the well-known truth that in the religious world the greater men have endless debts of recognition to pay to some humble, or even nameless, helper in the faith. Andrew brought Peter, a much greater man than himself, to Jesus; Aquila and Priscilla did this for Apollos. And by their agency he came to Corinth, when God's hour had struck for a change of personality and methods. Paul had left the city; then, for some unexplained reason, the gospel cause began to languish. So much is implied in the phrase, 'Apollos did the watering.' The Apostle's metaphor is that of a garden where the plants have been set out in the spring, but drought and scorching winds (and both were evident enough in Corinth) had caused them to pine and wither; and a man was needed to revive the things that were ready to die. The volatile Greek temperament was not of the type to run and not be weary, or walk and not faint. By intention Paul had fed them on the simplicities of the gospel, and they would not have been Greeks if they had not entered the Church on some high tide of emotion. But at this further stage they needed teaching, if they were to take root in the new faith. Revivals are God's instrument for awaking the careless,

touching their hearts, and giving them the will to believe. But men in general, and the Church in particular, cannot live on revivals. Observers used to note (with what truth one does not know) that the Welsh Revival might have been even more fruitful had it been persistently followed up by a lasting effort to instruct and gather into the fellowship of an understanding faith the people who first had been arrested by the fervent emotional appeals of the evangelists. In any case, by the providence of God, Paul was followed by Apollos, who perhaps was more kin to the Greek mind and temperament than a Jerusalem-nurtured Jew could ever be, and might have an entry into minds that were closed against Paul, the Hebrew of the Hebrews. Even the strongly-marked features of Paul's conversion had not a universal appeal.

We should remember also that we have only Paul's side of the difficulties in Corinth, and it is no disparagement to the Apostle to inquire if there was not another side. Apollos was the man for the new situation; birth, temperament, and education pointed him out as such. He was eloquent, and mighty in the Scriptures, perhaps with a gift for allegory and the charm of pictorial exposition that an Alexandrian would be sure to use. He had, besides, a fine record in the culture of souls, for we are told that 'Apollos had proved of great service to those who by God's grace had believed' (Acts xviii. 28). And, like Paul himself, he was of the order of the great, generous, and friendly minds, a man who was too big for jealousy or faction, since 'envy is the fume of little minds.' It is grateful, therefore, to recall the noble rivalry in honour and great-heartedness of these two workers. The jealousies between the Paul and Apollos parties left the two principals untouched. Paul invited Apollos to return to Corinth, and he, knowing the situation that had emerged, as generously refused to go. It might have been otherwise, and how often it is, to the prejudice and hurt of the Kingdom of God. We have dwelt upon the temperament of Apollos for its own sake, and to bring out the underlying truth, that in Christian service each varying personality has its place, and not grudgingly or for charity's sake, but it has its own inherent, indefeasible right as part of the endless and varied wisdom of God, who has room and need for each man in his own order and type.

God fulfils Himself in all His instruments. Paul and Apollos are both needed, the Evangelist and the other type. Let us have a hospitable mind for varying conditions, and workers, and views. It is Moses' prayer for the men who were prophesying outside the camp: 'Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them' (Num. xi. 29). 'I did the planting, Apollos did the watering.' And the Master Himself has said, 'One soweth, and another reapeth; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together' (John iv. 36, 37).

II

GOD PERFECTING PERSONALITY

But it was God who made the seed grow. 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.' A score of human workers may fail, but there is no failure with God.

In the 7th verse Paul repeats the truth more absolutely, and perhaps more rhetorically: 'So neither planter nor waterer counts, but God alone who makes the seed to grow.' Taking it literally, one might read the expression in the old Jewish way of exalting God so high that human responsibility and personality in service count for nothing. But Paul does not mean that, for he has said in this very letter that man is a fellow-worker with God. The statement here is a comparative one; in comparison with the Great Maker, Paul or Apollos is nothing. And if we are not pedants or precisians in Christian doctrine we know what the words intend. Every prayer, each cry for the Spirit implies them. Every day that we wait upon God tells us He is All. In the ages before Christ, those who looked for the Messiah used to believe that God Himself would bring in the Day, and they had an extreme way of saying that no man by his agency could hasten it by a single hour. The text, however, has not this half-truth behind it. But Paul is pleading with every Christian worker for the feeling of dependence. It is not on the day when men feel sufficient in zeal, learning, or wisdom, that God's work is best done. We do not decry cleverness any more than eloquence, but there is a cleverness which is not honouring to God.

That was the situation in Corinth with these versatile, shallow, and frothy Greeks. And the Apostle warns them, and his warning stands for us all. We wonder at times how some stammering preacher, without, as it seems to us, any corresponding endowment or gifts, is a great soul-gatherer, bringing in his sheaves to the heavenly garner. In this sense Dr Dale of Birmingham said to Mr Moody after first hearing him preach, 'Now I know, Moody, that this work is of God, because there is no sign that it is anything in you,' and the great evangelist entirely understood the meaning of the double-edged words, and agreed with them. No man who has had a glimpse of the Unseen can mistake them. One might put it like this. There are days when the angler tries in vain every stream and pool, while there are other days when the line has scarcely touched the water before success comes. Or, we have seen the fisher with the finest and most expensive gear toil in vain, and on the other side of the river a schoolboy with a makeshift of a branch for a rod fills his basket. And this is true in the art of man-fishing. In stating it, we have wandered from Paul's metaphors, but the underlying truth is the same. There are ministries which God honours, and in these ministries there are days when casting the line anywhere, as Jesus said to the fishermen of Galilee, they take men alive. Our sufficiency is only of God. Andrew Bonar used to connect his fruitless Sundays with a foregoing week which had been too busy for prayer or for the indwelling of the Divine Spirit. Christ did not make *many* promises to His disciples, but one day to encourage them in prayer He said, 'How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him' (Luke xi. 13). It is the preacher's text—the well-spring of his inspiration, and the condition of each fruitful service. When a great preacher lingered in the vestry long beyond his time, by one who waited he was heard saying that he could not and would not go unless *He* came with him. This was Paul's belief when he said, 'It is God alone who makes the seed grow.'

W. M. Grant.

Divine Partnership

1 Cor. iii. 9.—'We are God's fellow-workers' (R.V.).

Startled by the boldness of the expression of the text, as if it verged on profanity, interpreters have been found to give it a different meaning—'fellow-labourers under God,' 'fellow-workers in God's field.' But this is not justified by the language used. The meaning of St Paul's words is, 'We are at work with God himself.' And to the bold idea of joint labour with God there is added the idea of dependence. 'We are God's day-labourers, working *with* him.' It is His to pay the workmen, and to value their labour. For is it not *His* Church, *His* field, *His* house? It is to a Divine possession that the workers put their hand. What gravity attaches to such labour! To cultivate a field the harvest of which is God's! To build the house which God Himself is to inhabit! God alone can estimate such labour, and He will not fail to do so. These are the ideas in the Apostle's mind when he says: 'We are God's fellow-workers.'

The principle embodied is a very wide one, and it applies in all regions of life and activity, intellectual, scholastic, philanthropic, social: wherever men are thinking God's thoughts and trying to carry into effect any phase or side of God's manifold purposes of good and blessing to the world, there it is true. Every man who is trying to make men understand God's thought, whether it is expressed in creation, or whether it is written in history, or whether it is engraven in half-obliterated letters on the constitution of human nature—every man who, in any region of society or life, is seeking to effect the great designs of the universal loving Father—can take to himself, in the measure and according to the manner of his special activity, the great encouragement of the text, and feel that he, too, is a fellow-helper to the truth and a fellow-worker with God.

1. In its most literal sense this word holds true of all honest effort. As Adam Bede declared, every faithful workman is carrying out in his daily task a fragment of God's great plan. Every one who produces or distributes things useful or beautiful is helping on the good of the world.

Ah, little recks the labourer
How close his work is holding him to God,
The loving Labourer through space and time.

There are two unwritten sayings of our Lord. To the mason He said, 'Raise your stone and I am beneath it'; to the carpenter, 'Split your timber and I am inside.' They tell us that He is to be found in the ordinary routine of daily life. Does not that thought make a difference? It lights up the most monotonous task with new dignity. It makes it easy and natural for us to pray before we go to our work and about our work, for it is His as well as ours. We are fellow-workers with God.

2. In his own training, in the development of his character, man is a worker with God. Man's own will and effort constitute one of the factors in his progress. You remember the little child's quaint answer to the question, 'Who made you?' Said she, 'God made me so long, and I growed the rest myself.' That little girl's answer touched the very heart of the matter. We are made, intellectually and morally, just about so long; that is not our doing—'it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves'—but, after all, there is a good deal that we have to 'grow ourselves' and that we can grow ourselves.

¶ Theodore Parker used to say that man's life was only about three parts out of the hundred freedom, the rest, necessity. That is not much to claim for free will—the veriest necessarian might concede so much! But even three per cent. of moral freedom, if made the most of, and constantly turned over, may mount up gradually to a considerable increase of that stock-in-trade with which man started. It is that little free part of man's own, even if it be only three per cent., which, not buried in the napkin of indolence or fatalism, but put out to interest in busy striving life, has brought man from a state of savagery up to civilization, and in which lie the possibilities of further progress still—the potentialities of the hero, sage, and saint in this world, and of the angel in the life to come.[1]

3. It is through men that God helps and saves men. He needs men to carry out His purposes. True, on the Cross Jesus spoke the triumphant word, 'It is finished.' He did not thereby simply mean that He had completed all His suffering; He meant that He had then done all that the world needed to have done in order that it should be a redeemed world. But for the distribution and application of that finished work God depends on men. There is such a thing as 'coming to the help of the Lord,' though that phrase seems to reverse altogether the true relation. It is the duty of every Christian, partly because of loyalty to Jesus, and partly because of the responsibility which the very constitution of society lays upon every one of us, to diffuse what he possesses, and to be a distributing agent for the life that he himself enjoys. There is no possibility of Christian men and women being fully faithful to the Saviour, unless they recognize that the duty of being a fellow-worker with God inevitably follows on being a possessor of Christ's salvation.

¶ The highest of all privileges is to share with God the work of recreation. There are no flowers so winsome as those you have grown in your own garden, and there is no life gives you such joy as the life you have helped to make beautiful by your own heart's blood. Let us regard every man as a possible sphere of service, and set to work to turn the untilled field into a garden.[1]

¶ In his controversy with John Stuart Mill, the French philosopher Comte said, 'My Deity, that is, Humanity, has this advantage over yours: He needs help.' The English philosopher met the charge by saying, 'The theist's God is not omnipotent; He can be helped, great worker though He be.' What Mill described as 'the feeling of helping God' has always been cherished by the most sincere and earnest believers in the power of God over all.

4. The fact that the work is God's is our great encouragement. He who works for the redemption of men from the deepest evils of their life will not long want the sign that God works. Over all the fields of human life God is at work; through the streets of the city Christ is still walking. There is no one who knows that so well as the man who is at closest grips with suffering and with sin, for every day as he goes forward he finds God there; and nowhere so visibly as just where the darkness seems the greatest.

[1] Brooke Herford.

[1] J. H. Jowett.

¶ I know nothing more moving than to pass by train over one of our high-level railway lines, and to look down upon the crowded roofs of East or South London, each roof covering some little home or homes filled with teeming human lives; and then, as you look down upon it all, to remember that over all that mass of poverty and work and squalor, over every street, every home, every man and woman and child in that street, just as once, over the darkness of chaos, the Spirit of Almighty God is brooding, working still to bring light out of darkness, and order out of confusion, and life out of death. This is no mere bit of religious idealism, no mere phrase which will not stand in the light of experience; it is just experience which tests and proves it. It is just by contact with men that you find how that Spirit of God is there, where, perhaps, you would least expect to find Him; how, even though the religious life which they see round them does not touch them as yet, men have still that in them which is reaching forward

Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,
But dream of him, and guess where he may be,
And do their best to climb and get to him.[1]

¶ One day Froude observed to Carlyle, after they had been discussing together the problem of a God, that God never seemed to show Himself in the affairs of men. Carlyle, with a look of pain in his face and a tone of solemnity not to be easily forgotten, exclaimed, 'The worst of it is God never seems to do anything, Froude.' Carlyle possibly expected God to come on the stage of history and play the part of a hugely magnified Cromwell, or Frederick the Great, or Napoleon. He was craving for a portentous demonstration of force that would settle the world's 'fools' once for all. Christ had different thoughts and expectations, and was able to see that God is always and everywhere active. 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.'[2]

5. The fact that we are linked with God in His service is the pledge of victory. If God works with us success is sure. If God is doing this work, then God's strength, God's skill, God's knowledge are employed upon it. It is God's work. Therefore it must be triumphant. There is no place for misgiving or despondency. No sense of personal frailty, no calculation of opposing odds, no fears of approaching evil, no symptoms of immediate failure—none of these can appal us. God's work is eternal. Nothing can prevail against it. There may be temporary defeats, partial fallings back. Men may come and men may go. But what then? 'All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.'

I cannot do it alone,
The waves run fast and high,
And the fogs close chill around,
And the light goes out in the sky;
But I know that we two
Shall win in the end—
Jesus and I.

I cannot row it myself,
My boat on the raging sea;
But beside me sits Another
Who pulls or steers with me,
And I know that we two
Shall come safe into port—
His child and He.

Coward and wayward and weak,
I change with the changing sky;
To-day so eager and brave,
To-morrow not caring to try;
But He never gives in,
So we two shall win—
Jesus and I.

Strong and tender and true,
Crucified once for me!
Never will He change, I know,
Whatever I may be!
But all He says I must do,
Ever from sin to keep free.
We shall finish our course
And reach home at last—
His child and He.

[1] G. H. Aitken.
[2] T. G. Selby, *The Lesson of a Dilemma*, 372.

The One Foundation

1 Cor. iii. 11.—'For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

Christ the One Foundation. That has been the teaching of the Church from the earliest

days till now. In every age and in every land the Church has taught invariably that the one determining factor of the Christian religion is the Person of Jesus. That is the absolute, essential thing. The Christian religion is not a mere system of doctrine. It is not a mere ethical code. It is not merely a redemptive social force. It is, above all, dependence on a Person. And herein lies its peculiarity and its novelty. A Church Father of the second century, being pressed with the question, 'What new thing did the Lord bring us by His coming?' replied, 'Know that He brought all newness in bringing us Himself.'

¶ 'What have you in your religion that we haven't in ours?' I was asked that question by an ardent Arya Samajist. He expected me to argue with him the question concerning what moral ideas and philosophic principles we had that they did not have. I answered, 'Shall I tell you in a word? *You have no Christ.*'[1]

But in recent years this catholic belief has been on many sides assailed. Competent scholars tell us that the root of Christianity is not a Person but a doctrine, that the Person is only the prophet, the preacher, the publisher of that doctrine. We look in vain in these new theories for the Jesus that we knew. We find, indeed, a man of singular perfection, a man of unique spiritual insight. We find a religious genius whom we cannot but revere. We find an heroic soul filled to the full with the Spirit of God, and responding to the promptings of that Spirit in the most perfect way imaginable. But the Lord, the Christ of the Church, we do not find.

¶ Read Robert Elsmere's speech to the working men of East London: 'He laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of a rock, and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.' The ashes of Jesus of Nazareth mingled with the earth of Palestine—

> Far hence he lies
> In the lorn Syrian town,
> And on his grave, with shining eyes,
> The Syrian stars look down.

He stopped. The melancholy cadence of the verse died away. Then a gleam broke over the pale, exhausted face—a gleam of extraordinary sweetness. 'And in the days and weeks that followed, the devout and passionate fancy of a few mourning Galileans begat the exquisite fable of the Resurrection. How natural, and amid all its falseness how true, is that naive and contradictory story! The rapidity with which it spread is a measure of many things. It is, above all, a measure of the greatness of Jesus, of the force with which he had drawn to himself the hearts and imaginations of men.'[1]

[1] E. Stanley Jones, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, 63.

Here, then, are two views, between which nowadays men make their choice. The one finds the basis of religion in a Person, the other in a teaching. And the critical question which thousands of thoughtful men and women are to-day debating is, Which of the two shall command their concurrence and assent?

Let us look at this all-important question in the light of certain facts. For we cannot too often remember that we have facts to deal with. There are facts of primitive belief: there are facts of original claim: there are facts of Christian history. Which of these views, then, best squares with all the facts? Let us consider them in turn.

1. *Facts of Primitive Belief.*—Let us inquire what the first generation of Christians thought about Jesus. And for this purpose, let us take as representative the first who left on record his opinion, the Apostle Paul. Now we have to remember that this same Paul was himself a part-contemporary of Jesus who wrote his first extant letter within twenty-five years of His death. No glamour of antiquity could in this short time have obscured the historic outline of the Man of Nazareth to dazzle Paul's eyes or mystify his intellect. What, then, has Paul to tell us about Jesus?

If we open his earliest letter—the first letter to the Thessalonians—and turn to the first chapter and the very first verse, we find an astonishing sentence: 'Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.' How remarkable this is! We modern men are so accustomed to the formula and the doctrine it implies that we fail, perhaps, to realize the wonder and the novelty of it. But with what a thrill of horror would an orthodox Hebrew of the Apostle's age have read those words! Remember that the reference is to One who in living memory died, so to speak, on the scaffold; remember the common belief that 'cursed,' not by man only, but by God, 'is

[1] Mrs Humphry Ward, *Robert Elsmere*, ch. xxxvii.

every one that hangeth on a tree'; remember, moreover, that the title 'Lord,' here most emphatically ascribed to Jesus, is the very word which is used by the Greek translators of the Old Testament to render the Hebrew 'Jehovah'; and then conceive the feelings of the Jewish monotheist when he heard of this crucified Sufferer being crowned with the Divine name, and positively linked, as the Giver of grace and peace, with the One and Only God, the God of Israel, the Almighty! Paul solemnly couples together Jesus Christ and God. From the very first, it is clear, he found in Jesus Someone higher than a man; from the very first he saw 'shining on the brow of the Victim of Calvary the Divine glory of the Son of God.'

Could any loftier claims be made for Jesus than these which were actually made within but forty years of His death? Here, surely, is a notable fact with which we are compelled to reckon. For the first generation of believers, as for the later Church, the system of Christianity is grounded upon a Person, a Being at once human and superhuman, truly man yet no less truly more-than-man, the 'God-man,' Jesus Christ.

2. *Facts of Original Claim.*—Let us notice what Jesus has to say about Himself. He says He is greater than Jonas, greater than Solomon, greater even than the sacred Temple. The prophets, kings, and saints of olden time—He stands above them all. Over the very angels He exalts Himself; they are His ministers, subject to His bidding. Towards His disciples His imperiousness is unbounded. He demands, as though it were the most natural thing in the world, that they should live for Him alone, that they should give up all in life they love for Him—father and mother, children, and home, and wife. With God, again, He claims a unique relation. He says, without any attempt at justification: 'All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth . . . the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.' The sublimity of the sage, the speculation of the sophist, the awful wisdom of the anointed priest—all this He sweeps aside, proclaiming that He alone of men can fathom the abysses of the Infinite. So, too, this youthful Galilean carpenter ascribes to Himself an ecumenical importance. He looks on the seething turmoil of nations, races, peoples, and He calls them to His heart, crying, 'Come unto me, and I will give you rest.' He looks again into the distant future and sees the nations gathered at His judgment-seat. The dead come up and the living come up, while He sits majestic on the throne of the Almighty and utters the final, dreadful word of life and death.

How startling, how utterly astonishing, is this self-consciousness of Jesus! Surely no thoughts or visions such as these ever found entrance into merely human mind. The very idea of being the one and only Mediator of God! No moral teacher or enraptured prophet ever conceived himself in a character so sublime. Yet this was the character that Jesus, as a matter of historical fact, not only conceived, but consistently sustained. It is no mere man, though unmistakably man, that comes to meet us here. We are constrained to bow in worship. We are compelled to confess that the Person thus presented to us can be none other than the Son of God.

¶ In one of his essays, Emerson complains of 'the wearisome iteration' with which Christians insist on the importance of the Person of Christ. Our answer to the complaint of the great American thinker is that we cannot help ourselves. Christ insisted upon His own importance. To use the words of Ian Maclaren: 'The life-blood of Christianity is Christ. As Louis said, "I am the State," so may Jesus say, "I am My religion."' We insist upon the importance of the Person of Christ because He did the same; and so long as He is our supreme authority we can do no other than follow Him.[1]

3. *Facts of Christian History.*—But the question of the Person of Jesus cannot be settled merely by appeal to ancient books. One great fact still remains to be accounted for, and that is His stupendous influence on the history of mankind. Christ has led captive all the peoples of the civilized world, who find in Him the abiding inspiration of their progress and development. On every sphere of our life He has left His mark. To the politician He has given a law, to the thinker a philosophy, to the poet a song, to the saint a passion. Transcendent works of human genius have been brought forth at His call. The chiselled stone swells into graceful arch, and rises airily into dome and spire, to do Him honour. Music for Him breathes out

[1] H. Varley.

her sweetest chant. For Him the scholar chronicles his finest thought; to Him the hero dedicates his proudest deed; to Him the statesman offers as a votive gift his knowledge, eloquence, and practised skill.

What multitudes, too, of obscure and unrecorded lives have been held, possessed, and governed by the influence of Jesus! He has set up a throne in the universal human heart, and millions of every age and race and class and character have yielded to His sway. And all alike bear testimony that they have proved Christ adequate to their needs, that they have gained from Him the enduring satisfaction of their souls' desires and cravings.

Now, surely this requires some explanation. All the world over it is true that out of nothing nothing comes. For great results there must be cause proportionate. Then let us ask once more, What cause, what force, what manner of intelligence can have been adequate to produce effects so wonderful? Great men, it is true, have often for a season won ascendancy over their fellows. Socrates and Muhammad, Luther and Napoleon, and many another son of earth, have touched and deeply stirred the souls of men and set hearts beating at a fiery speed. But where is the man whose power is not spent, whose influence is not broken, whose personal fascination is not weakened, as age after age disappears into the past? Where is the man who could so enthral humanity as to force it to preach him, trust him, love him, worship him in all times, in all circumstances, in all places whithersoever the knowledge of his name might come? Could any mere man really have done all this? The experience of the race says No. The philosophy of human history says No. History bears witness only to a Christ who is Divine.

¶ There is a verse in Emerson which seems broad-minded and tolerant, down which cultured by-path he has led many from the centre of things. In writing of the world's great men he tells us—

> One was born in a manger,
> And one by Avon's stream,
> One grew up by the banks of the Nile,
> And one in the Academe.

That seems to make Jesus so human and yet to place Him among the noblest and wisest of men. He takes front rank among the benefactors of mankind. But it robs Him of the one thing essential for our faith, His Divinity.[1]

In a well-known book occurs this passage: 'Christianity is faith in a certain person, Jesus Christ, and by faith in Him is meant such unreserved self-committal as is only possible because faith in Jesus is understood to be faith in God, and union with Jesus union with God.' Such without doubt was the Christianity of the past. And may we not believe that, in spite of the perplexities and questionings of modern times, such will be also the Christianity of the future? 'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

The Teacher's Text

1 Cor. iii. 11-13.—'For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.'

The original application of these words is distinctly to Christian teachers. The whole section starts from a rebuke of the party spirit in the Corinthian Church which led them to swear by Paul or Peter or Apollos, and to despise all teachers but their own favourite. The Apostle reminds these jangling partisans that all teachers are but instruments in God's hands, who is the true Worker, the true Husbandman, the true Builder. That word opens up a whole region of thought to his ardent mind. He goes on to speak of the foundation which God has laid, namely, the mission of Jesus Christ. That foundation laid once for all in actual reality, in the historical facts of our Lord's life, death, and resurrection, had been laid in preaching by St Paul when he founded the Corinthian Church. There cannot be two foundations. So all other teachers at Corinth have only to build on that foundation, that is, to carry on a course of Christian teaching which rests upon that fundamental truth. Let all such teachers take heed what sort of materials they build on that foundation—in other words, what sort of teaching they offer; for there may be gold, and silver, and precious stones—solid and valuable instruction; or there may be timber, and hay, and straw

[1] S. M. Watts.

—worthless and unsubstantial teaching. The materials with which the teachers build are evidently the instruction which they give, or the doctrines which they teach.

The teacher's work is spoken of as the building of a house, with the certainty that there will be a fire. The builder of a house usually builds in the hope that there will not be a fire. Sometimes he takes precautions against a fire. It is not often that he builds the house so that it may pass through the fire. But the building which the Christian teacher builds *will* pass through the fire. He knows it will, and he must build accordingly. So there are three things in the text—the Foundation, the Building, and the Fire.

1. *The Foundation.*—The Christian teacher has not to lay the foundation. It is laid already. 'Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid.' The Foundation is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ? What does that mean? His example? No. It is true that He went about doing good; that He denied Himself even unto death. And we must do good also. We must take up our cross and follow Him. We must enter into the fellowship of His sufferings and be made conformable unto His death. But the example of Jesus Christ is not Jesus Christ, and it is not the Foundation.

His teaching, then? No, not His teaching. Our teaching may be His teaching so far as we understand it and can make it applicable; but that is the building, not the foundation. The Foundation is Jesus Christ Himself, an historical person. It is not doctrines about Christ. No theory of the Atonement is needed for the foundation. But neither is it Jesus Christ shorn of all doctrine, of all that makes Him Jesus Christ. It is not a human Jesus who was no Christ. It is not a Christ of the devout imagination who never was Jesus. It is Jesus Christ who was born, lived, died, rose again, and is alive. These five make up Jesus Christ, and we may not cut one of them away. Are they five miracles? We cannot help that. We have not Jesus Christ without them. We have not Jesus Christ unless we have them all.

The teacher does not lay the foundation. It is laid already. It is there, an historical fact, laid once for all in the past; a spiritual fact, ready for a spiritual building, in every moment of the present.

2. *The Building.*—There are many kinds of buildings. At the present time a great deal of discussion is going on about housing and what are the best and cheapest materials for building. A building may be slim or it may be substantial. It may be useful or it may be ornamental. The peculiarity of the building of which the Apostle speaks is that it must pass through fire. So, he says, it must not be built of wood, or hay, or stubble. The materials must be fire-proof. And the materials are the things which we teach about Christ. What are the things about Christ which will stand the fire?

(1) That *Christ is a Saviour*, not merely a Helper. We need more than help to tide us over our troubles. We need deliverance from them. We need more than One who is willing to take the heavier end of our burden. We need One who will lift it from our shoulders altogether, and send it, like the burden from the back of Bunyan's Christian, rolling out of sight.

¶ A converted Chinaman thus quaintly tells the story of his conversion: 'I was lying in a deep, dark pit, with no hope of rescue, and ready to die. Confucius came by, and looking in said, "If you ever get out, be careful not to get in again." Next, a Buddhist priest came by, looked in and said, "Poor fellow, I am very much pained to see you there; if you only come up part of the way I might help you." At last there came one called Jesus, and His face was bright with kindness. He came right down into the pit where I lay helpless, lifted me clear out of it, washed away my uncleanness, clothed me in white raiment, and said, "Go, and sin no more."'[1]

¶ More and more, as life unfolds itself to you, you will know that your primary need is to be loosed from your sins, loosed from the past sins which follow you, trouble you, haunt you, wear you out, loosed from the nature that ever bends you towards sin, which finds temptations so fierce, so irresistible. This is what the Supreme Love has done for as many as have received Him. He loved us and loosed us from our sins in His own Blood, and made us kings and priests unto God.[2]

(2) That *Christ is the only Saviour*—the only Saviour for us and for all men. We are not to find salvation in the Church, or in Conduct, or in Creed. We are to find salvation in Christ,

[1] W. H. W. Boyle.
[2] W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Seen and the Unseen*, 100.

and in Christ alone. We will not forget to teach and preach about the Church and about the faith which worketh through love, but we will remember that neither Church, nor deed, nor Creed can save us, but Christ crucified, and He only. Perhaps our keenest temptation here is to make our salvation dependent on our faith in such a way as to make our faith in Christ itself the Saviour of our souls.

¶ Moody-Stuart tells this incident in his recollections of Rabbi Duncan: At a Highland communion in a meeting for 'speaking to the question,' on a Friday evening, the subject selected was Faith. One after another of the 'men' spoke in glowing terms of the power and the triumphs of Faith, and each speaker exalted it more than the one before him. At last their esteemed minister, jealous for the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ, stood up and said, 'I ask, Was Faith crucified for you; or were ye baptized in the name of Faith?'[1]

These are the materials. But out of these materials we must form a building. There must be a unity about our work, a harmony throughout our teaching. We must explain the things about Christ and set them in their proper place and in their right proportion. We must not let holiness be lost in love, or love be killed by holiness. We must not hide the providence of God, or ignore the freedom of man. The building must be shapely. There may be much work at the laying of a foundation which the eye cannot look upon. Was there ever more unsightly work than at the laying of this Foundation. But the foundation is laid once and for all time and we are raising the building now. We tell the story of the Cross, but as an historical fact. We add to it the story of the Resurrection. We are not called upon to be for ever enacting a Passion Play, and repeating the ugly work that was done when the foundation was laid. We are building the building now, and not only should the materials be fire-proof, but they should form a building that is fair to see. They should fall into a system in harmony with the character of God and the mind of Christ.

3. *The Fire.*—So we come last of all to the fire. Now we do not need to fix the date of the fire. Is it in this life, or in the life to come? We do not need to worry about that. Nor do we need to describe its character. It is enough for us that it is a fact. The Apostle says that the fire will not only try our work; it will also declare it. It will be revealed in fire. We shall not have to wait for God's verdict upon our work. When the fire plays upon it we shall see ourselves of what sort it is. Is it wood, hay, stubble?—we shall see it flash into ashes. Is it gold, silver, precious stones?—the fire will throw it into greater brilliance and purify it as it burns. Is not that what the Apostle means by the reward? He says: 'If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.' Could there be a greater reward than this: To see with our own eyes that the work we have done is work for God and that it abides eternally?

[1] *Recollections of the late John Duncan, LL.D.*, 124.

Builders

1 Cor. iii. 11-15.—'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.'

THE most awful of all destinies is that which the Bible expresses in that terrible phrase, to lose our own soul—the eternal wreck and ruin of our very selves. But, setting that aside, St Paul is here thinking that the next worst thing we can conceive is that all our work should be destroyed. Faith in God, even the feeblest, means that there is a purpose in things, and that we strive towards some enduring end. And corresponding to this faith is the desire to do some work which will last, to contribute something to the permanent and eternal structure. But when we look round upon the world of our experience it strikes the religious mind with a strange horror to see the mass of men building, to all appearance, simply for the present. We see so much frivolity, impatience, idleness, careless work, that it is easy enough to take a cynical view of human effort and human work and life.

> What is the course of the life
> Of mortal men on the earth?—
> Most men eddy about

Here and there—eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurl'd in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing; and, then they die—
Perish—and no one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves
In the moonlit solitudes mild
Of the midmost Ocean have swelled,
Foam'd for a moment, and gone.[1]

In that strange and fascinating book, the Book of Ecclesiastes, we find the writer taking the cynical view of human life. It is not worth while to be very wicked, for to be very wicked is to be very foolish. It is not worth while to try to be very good, or to follow a high ideal, because it leads to nothing. 'Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise; why shouldest thou destroy thyself?' 'Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish; why shouldest thou die before thy time?' It is better to pursue the middle path of moderation and worldiness.

To the state of mind of Ecclesiastes, to this spirit of cynicism and scepticism, the spirit of our Lord affords the final and summary contradiction. Our Lord was as far removed as possible from the shallow optimism which paints human life in bright colours. He marks the shortsightedness and vanity of human efforts. 'Jesus did not commit himself to men because he knew them all, and needed not that any should bear witness about man; because he knew for himself what was in man . . .'—that sad secret of human untrustworthiness which in slow and embittering experience has turned philanthropists into cynics. He knew it with His unshrinking insight into human nature. Nothing great could be done with human nature without a fundamental recreation, without a deep conversion and a new birth. One of the features of our Lord's character is its consummate thoroughness. Below the shifting sand of human untrustworthiness He still saw in men a capacity for the greatest things. To this fundamental manhood He would dig down, and on it He would build. In His life upon earth He refused utterly to compromise with the spirit of 'the world which passeth away'—'the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.' At the beginning of His public career the spirit which makes for what men call success tempted Him and was repudiated. This utterly uncompromising spirit in which He approached life meant what men called failure. He was 'the poor wise man' of the Book of Ecclesiastes, who by His wisdom would have delivered the city. But they would take no account of Him; they rejected and crucified Him. That was the triumph of the spirit of the world. But the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the Divine vindication of His method. It makes evident that the one power in the world, the creative power of God, the power which made and sustains all things, is on the side of His seeming weakness. And the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was not only the Divine vindication of His personal life and work; it was also the assurance of His Kingdom. It gave the sufficient and final guaranty that through all seeming failures, through all shocks and catastrophes, the Divine Kingdom was at last to be set up. Henceforth it was worth while for men to do their best and to be their best. And if the prophets of the Old Testament and of the New see the treasures of all the world, the 'desirable things'—the 'glory and honour' of all nations—brought within the light and compass of the Holy City, we can dare to believe that nothing in all the wide compass of human activity, in every age, that has been truly thought, or worthily done, shall ever be lost. It shall all be found built up into the city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the ineffable Name?
Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made with hands!
What, have fear of change from thee who art ever the same?
Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy power expands?
There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before;
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound;
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;
On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven, a perfect round.[1]

[1] Matthew Arnold, *Rugby Chapel.*

[1] Browning, *Abt Vogler.*

1. *Physical Work.*—It is worth while to set ourselves with all seriousness to do our best work and to persevere in this effort unto the end, to do work of the quality that will last. Work is laid on all men by the primal law, 'In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread,' 'Six days shalt thou labour.' No man is exempt from this law. To be born with means at our disposal through no labour of our own does not exempt us from the obligation in God's sight of earning our living. But if we are to appreciate truly this law of work we must be at pains to take a comprehensive view of what work means. There is the work first of all of those whom, by a limitation of the term, equally unfortunate for those who are included in it as for those who are not, we call working men. It is unfortunate because it suggests that some men or women are entitled not to be workers, but to enjoy themselves on the proceeds of other men's work, which is not the case; and unfortunate for those who are included in it, because it suggests that manual labour is the only kind of work. It is hard in fact for manual labourers to believe otherwise. If a labourer a hundred years ago in Westmorland, sweating over his plough or reap-hook, had seen an old gentleman loitering along by the side of the field, sitting or lying long hours in seeming idleness, gazing on the scene spread out before him, he would have thought him an idle fellow: but it might have been William Wordsworth, with all his faculties of brain on fire in the composition of one of his immortal sonnets.

2. *The Work of Character.*—But how about moral work, the work of character? How many posts are there in the world for which what is wanted is not a very strong man, or a very clever or skilful man, but a completely trustworthy man? And he is not always easy to find. Or, conversely, how many men, who are strong and clever enough, fail through faults of character? The reason is because incredibly few people realize that the making of their characters, moral labour, is one of the most exacting and most necessary kinds of labour allotted to the sons of men. No doubt men differ immensely in natural equipment. But they differ at least as much in the pains they take with themselves; and real accomplishment in life depends as much on this sort of labour as on natural equipment.

¶ Mr Charles M. Schwab, the American millionaire says: 'In my long experience in business life and association with men there are some fundamental things that must not be overlooked. If I were asked to say the most important things that lead to a successful life, I should say that first of all is integrity. No man can do anything of any great value in life if he does not have the reputation of honour and integrity.'[1]

3. *The Work of Suffering.*—Finally, there is the work of suffering. It is a superficial paradox to speak of the work of suffering, because we mean by suffering what comes upon us whether we like it or not, without any effort of ours. But we who believe that we were redeemed by suffering and death know that suffering can be work. In Jesus of Nazareth every pain that came upon Him in body and mind was accepted by His active will even as He hung there passive upon the Cross and turned into fruitful sacrifice. Sufferings small or great are wasted until, accepted by the will, they are turned into sacrifice and become infinitely fruitful.

¶ There was a poor girl lying on her back whom I used to visit every week in my first curacy; and it used to puzzle her, and to puzzle those who watched her, why she was allowed to lie like that for, I think, fifteen years. Well, I found a reading which comforted her more than anything in Bishop Walsham How's book, *Pastor in Parochia.* It was about the stone-mason's workshop—how the stone-mason takes his chisel and hammers away at the stone day after day with very little apparent result at first; but he is getting it ready for a place in his building, and the more time he spends on the stone the more beautiful a place it is going to have. That taught her—she would often make me read it on my visit—that she existed for the Church, the spiritual Temple; her years of suffering and patience were not waste of time. She loved to think that the Master-Builder was chiselling here, and working away there, to make her more fit for a beautiful place in His Temple.[2]

To come back to our starting-point. It is an ideal which should appeal to what is generous

[1] *The Children's Newspaper*, May 31, 1924.
[2] A. F. W. Ingram, *A Mission of the Spirit*, 126.

in every one—that of making the most of one's self, that of doing one's best work, that of doing work which can endure. There is not one of us who is not meant to have the consciousness all through life that he is a 'fellow-worker with God' for the establishment of His Kingdom; who is not meant to feel that it is his privilege and duty to make the best of himself and do his best work, because both what he is and what he does is for eternity. Religion becomes fruitful exactly in proportion as it results in the consecration of human faculty, consciously and deliberately, in all its varieties of gift and vocation, to do the work of God, to build the City of God among men. And we cannot do this without the utmost sincerity and seriousness and thoroughness of effect. As we grow older the question is 'How to persevere? How, with the consciousness of failure, of inadequate and wasted labour, can we really persist in fresh beginnings and carry to the end the courage and hope and faith with which we began?' The poignant cry of Emily Brontë finds an echo in many hearts:—

> Yes, as my swift days near their goal,
> 'Tis all that I implore;—
> In life and death a chainless soul,
> With courage to endure.

'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' Upon this foundation countless generations of men have built; it is ours to see to it that we build upon the one foundation material of the sort that will stand the testing fire.

¶ There is no alchemy by which we may get golden conduct out of leaden instincts—so Herbert Spencer told us very truly; but if our ideals are of gold, there is an alchemy which will transmute our external activities, so that our contributions to the spiritual temple may be no longer 'wood, hay, and stubble,' to be destroyed in the next conflagration, but precious and durable material.[1]

Self-Reverence

1 Cor. iii. 16.—'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you.'

'SELF-REVERENCE, self-knowledge, self-control'—these, according to Tennyson, are the qualities that go to build up a strong or beautiful character. They are the foundation-stones of success even in a worldly sense; but, above all, they alone make a man's life a success in the highest sense, for they alone enable him to realize the best that is in him, and to perform his work with inward harmony, and with beneficent effect upon others. Our subject is the first of these: the reverence which a man owes to himself as the temple of God.

Now, what is Reverence? It is the feeling of awe in presence of what is great, august, or sublime, of something that towers above us, and before which we prostrate ourselves. The object of our veneration may be of many different kinds. It may be the greatness of a famous nation, like ancient Greece or Rome, that for centuries has moulded the course of human history; or of a poet, like Shakespeare or Milton, who leaves on us an overwhelming impression of intellectual power; or, again, of some heroic life of self-sacrifice that thrills our souls by its nobleness. But, in all cases, reverence is awaked in us by that which transcends us, which we cannot fully grasp or estimate, which stretches far beyond us into immeasurable heights. We feel humbled before it, and yet it uplifts us with the consciousness that we are in contact with something whose greatness draws us out of our petty selves into loftier regions of thought and emotion.

¶ When Ruskin was addressing the students of Oxford, he concluded one of his lectures with these memorable words: 'This I know, that in Reverence is the chief joy and power of life—Reverence for what is pure and bright in your own youth; for what is true and tried in the age of others; for all that is gracious among the living, great among the dead, and marvellous in the Powers that cannot die.'

We can understand that we ought to reverence what is greater than we, such as genius or goodness in another; but how should a man reverence himself? Is that not the same thing as self-conceit? No; it is so far from being the same that it is just the opposite. We have to remember that the word 'self' is used in two senses, a good and a bad. When we say that a man is greedy or self-indulgent we are thinking of his lower self, his baser appetites and desires, his individual preferences and whims. When he pampers these with utter disregard for the claims and welfare of others, we say that his

[1] W. R. Inge, *Outspoken Essays*, 182.

selfishness makes him untrue to himself. What self? The higher self, his deepest nature as God has made it. This nature demands obedience to the law of duty, and consideration for others; and these can live and prosper only by resisting the impulses of the lower man. Our Lord points the same contrast when He says, 'He that loseth his life shall find it'; we have to give up the false and baser life that we may lay hold on that which alone is life indeed.

1. What, then, is this real self which a man ought to reverence? It is his inner personality. He is conscious that he is not at liberty to do what he likes with his life, that it is given him on conditions. He is subject to authority, has in his breast a monitor which says, 'This is the way; walk thou in it.' Daniel Webster, the famous American statesman, was once asked, 'What is the greatest thought that ever entered into your mind?' He paused for a moment, then replied, 'The fact of my personal accountability to God.' That is the glory and mystery of human life; the deepest fact in it, which makes all men equal, prince and peasant, the most brilliant genius and the humblest labourer. Each of them has been put in charge of himself, and he has to answer for himself in the end.

When we think of what our human life is, to what heights of nobleness it may rise, and to what depths of shame it may descend, how it may be rich and glorious with inward peace and happiness, or may be plunged into the most appalling wretchedness, we see something of the value of the treasure God has entrusted to our keeping. The thought that we are responsible for this soul of ours, charged as it is with such solemn issues, would over-balance and depress us, in view of the thousand temptations that may assail or destroy it, did we not know that in this fight to win our souls the Eternal Father is on our side. The whole life and death of Christ is not merely the triumph of a man over the powers of evil; it is the pledge that the might of the Divine is working for us, that the infinite resources of God's love and grace are at the disposal of every soul that claims them. 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world': the pages of the Gospels, and the long annals of the Christian Church show how gloriously that promise has been fulfilled—show that in Him the weak have found strength, the sinful, forgiveness, and the weary, rest. If the soul within us was counted worthy of the sacrifice of the Son of God, then it is indeed a fit dwelling-place for the Divine Spirit, worthy, surely, of all our reverence.

2. What are some of the effects of this Self-reverence?

(1) It is *the great preservative against vice*—indeed, it is the lack of self-reverence which largely accounts for the sin and folly of the world. Very often men are drawn into temptation by an easy compliance with the society around them. They are led to drink because others do so; they are content to sit acquiescent in a company where the conversation is foul or vulgar because they do not want to be counted peculiar or narrow-minded. So they endure what they inwardly dislike. Why? Because they have no true self-respect.

¶ Milton, in a noble passage, says: He that holds himself in reverence and due esteem, both for the dignity of God's image upon him, and for the price of his redemption, which he thinks is visibly marked upon his forehead, thinks himself both a fit person to do the noblest and godliest deeds, and much better worth than to deject and defile, with such a debasement and pollution as sin is, himself so highly ransomed and ennobled into a new friendship and filial relation to God. Nor can he fear so much the offence and reproach of others, as he dreads and would blush at the reflection of his own severe and modest eye upon himself, if it should see him doing or imagining that which is sinful, though in the deepest secrecy.

¶ 'It is above all things necessary,' said President Garfield, 'that in every action I should have the good opinion of James Garfield; for to eat, and drink, and sleep, and awake with one whom you despise, though that one be yourself, is an intolerable thought, and what must it be as a life experience?'

¶ It is the word of wise old Polonius over again—

> This above all: to thine own self be true,
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.

(2) Self-reverence is not only the supreme safeguard against base actions, it is *the inspiration to an ever higher goodness*. For, if we are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwelleth

in us, we do not seek guidance for the ordering of our life from traditional practices or the conventional standards of the world around us; we find it within us, in the living Spirit that is ever speaking in our consciences and hearts. It is this loyalty to their best selves that has been the source and spring of the noblest lives that earth has seen, not only of those whose names stand out on the page of history as martyrs and reformers and champions of freedom, but of the multitude which no man can number of unknown men and women who have striven, often at bitter cost to themselves, to carry the Gospel to the heathen abroad, or to relieve the suffering or raise the fallen at home.

(3) Self-reverence *teaches us reverence for others*. 'Every man,' says the proverb, 'judges others by himself.' And there is truth in that. A man can see only with his own eyes; and if he does not discern the Divine greatness and mystery of his own soul, he is not likely to think very highly of other souls. It is the man who realizes the value of his own life as a gift of God who recognizes the sacredness of every human life. And, for this very reason, he shrinks as by an instinct from doing aught that would minister to the lower side of their nature. If their character is tarnished, if the Divine likeness in them is defaced by sin, his whole relation to them will be animated by the desire to call forth the good that slumbers within them.

Life's Three Chapters

1 Cor. iii. 21.—'All things are yours.'

1. For many souls life unrolls itself as an adventure in three chapters. There is a stage at which we think the world was made for us, to please us and to amuse us. That is the natural outlook of youth, and even though in some ambitious or successful persons it survives into later years, it is specially and characteristically the youthful stage. It is present in the child, though as yet it may be unconscious or subconscious. The child without scruple accepts the world as a pageant arranged for his amusement. When a baby sits up and surveys life from his perambulator he often bears a startling resemblance to an Academy portrait of Royalty enthroned: there is something in his eye which accepts everything as lawful tribute, from the devotion of his nurse to the spectacular glories of the passing traffic. All things are his, of course they are: there is no reason why they should not be—that is the dawn of individuality. Later on, in young manhood or womanhood, the same outlook becomes more conscious. One thinks of young Joseph, dreaming of bending sheaves and bowing planets; of young Alexander, surnamed the Great, who set out to conquer the world while yet in his early twenties. Strindberg has in one of his dramas a young author about to have a play produced in Paris. He thinks it is going to make him famous, and on the morning of the great day he stands on the heights of Montparnasse overlooking the city and talks to a friend: 'Look over there, down there in the valley, where the haze is thickest; there lies Paris. To-day Paris doesn't know who Maurice is, but it is going to know within twenty-four hours. The haze which has kept me obscured for thirty years will vanish before my breath, and I shall become visible, I shall assume definite shape and begin to be somebody.'

Many a man has passed through moments like that, when he has had no doubt of conquering his Paris, his universe, when he was determined to make the world know who and what he was. There was an intoxicating thrill in such a dream of the morning. The sheaves bowed down to him as they bowed to Joseph. The world challenged him as it challenged Alexander. Like Sordello in the poem he fashioned his web of hope:

He o'er-festooning every interval,
As the adventurous spider, making light
Of distance, shoots her threads from depth to height,
From barbican to battlement: so flung
Fantasies forth and in their centre swung
Our architect,—the breezy morning fresh
Above, and merry,—all his waving mesh
Laughing with lucid dew-drops rainbow-edged.

2. In many cases, perhaps in most, that youthful stage wears off and gives place to another, where exactly the opposite seems true. Instead of the world being made for us, it seems to turn against us. In the very passage in which we are told about Sordello's fairy web

of ambition the poet goes on in his next lines to say:

This world of ours by tacit pact is pledged
To laying such a spangled fabric low
Whether by gradual brush or gallant blow.

The experience comes, of course, in different degrees to different persons: there is no need to be unfair to Providence or to bring railing accusations against life. But most people waken sooner or later to the fact that the world is not made for them in the sense in which they first assumed that it was. They discover that life, instead of being a pageant to amuse them, is a factory in which they have to toil fiercely and constantly. They discover that experience, as the Professor at the Breakfast Table put it, is not 'a little bundle of great things,' but 'a great bundle of little things,' many of them very dusty and tiresome. A man starts in business. He has health, ability, and a good opening. The ball is at his feet and he sees success almost within touching distance. But he has not reckoned on the rival players who come rushing upon him from every part of the field and get between him and the goal and contest his every step of progress. In a world where competition is so strong all things are not his if his rivals can succeed in keeping any of them away from him. Or a young soul feels within himself the power of a message: life reveals itself to him as an opportunity of service. In that sense, and not in any selfish or ignoble way, he will enter into it and possess it, making his mark upon it for whatever aspect of truth or duty his eyes have seen. But perhaps he has to confront this hard fact—that, if he has a message, the public are not very eager to hear it: if he has seen an ideal, the immediate effect upon his life is that of isolation: other men have seen things differently and he must walk alone. He belongs to the prophets—and they are not necessarily the false prophets—who have no honour in their own country; to the preachers—and they are not always the poor preachers—who see their congregations dwindle. 'An Australian padre,' writes Mr Gossip,[1] 'once told me that all the best sermons he had heard in Scotland had been preached in the emptiest churches.' The bitter cry of Jacob comes ringing down the ages reinforced by multitudinous experience: 'All these things are against me.' It may be, as Browning says, by a sudden blow, or it may be by a gradual brushing that the airy fantasy is swept away, but the dewy cobwebs are not often left long to gleam in the sunshine.

[1] *The British Weekly*, Nov. 11, 1926.

3. But by God's mercy some souls survive into a third stage of experience. They have discovered that the world was certainly not made in order to give them an easy path. But they have discovered under the Divine teaching and training that the world was made for them after all, as the school is made for the child, to give them education and discipline, the perfecting of their deepest selves, the full meaning of their salvation. Leaving the company of the Jacob, who cried out that all things were against him, they join the wiser fellowship of St Paul, when he says: 'All things work together for good to them that love God,' and again, 'All things are yours.' If men are ever to learn the meaning of life they must make up their minds that they are not here to be pleased and petted. They are here to be shaped into something better than they are, and once they have learned that fundamental lesson they are in a position to see things in their true proportion, to use them—the bright experiences or the dark—as they come, and to believe that in the saving process even battle and storm, loss and darkness, can find a place.

¶ In one of his letters Keats says: 'The common cognomen of this world among the misguided and the superstitious is a "Vale of Tears." Call the world if you please a "Vale of Soul-Making." Do you not see how necessary a world of pains and troubles is to school our intelligence and make it a soul? A place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways. As various as the lives of men are, so various become their souls, and thus does God make individual beings souls of the sparks of His own essence.'

I can believe this dread machinery
Of sin and sorrow, would confound me else,
Devised,—all pain, at most expenditure
Of pain by Who devised pain,—to evolve,
By new machinery in counterpart,
The moral qualities of man—how else?—
To make him love in turn and be beloved,
Creative and self-sacrificing too,
And thus eventually God-like.[1]

[1] Browning, *The Ring and the Book: The Pope.*

At this point in the argument there suddenly shines before us the Christ of the Cross. The vision, if it accomplishes within us what it was meant to do, not only comforts us but slays our worldliness and sets new standards of value. If ever the Divine Father said to any of His children, 'All things are yours,' surely He said it to His sinless Son. Yet His was no outward and easy conquest. When we see Him at the last He is stripped, wounded, and broken, all things surrendered, all things taken away. Yet all things were His at last through the Cross, not by escaping the Cross. His self-surrender was His self-fulfilment. In proportion as men assimilate that lesson they escape from the first short-sighted stage when they thought that the world lay before them an easy conquest. They escape from the second and almost equally blind stage when it seemed that the scheme of things was an enemy, bent only on crushing the human will. They learn at last that life is a school. Those who have patience to take that stage in their training with faith and hope emerge from it ready for their ultimate graduation: they have shared one of the deepest secrets in the loving wisdom of our God.

Christian Possession

1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.—'All things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come.'

THESE words come from the man who had lived as an artisan amid the heaped riches of Corinth. And he speaks to those among whom there are not many wise, not many noble, not many mighty. Is it a rhetorical flourish or the excited vision of an ascetic? Or is the speaker one for whose weak nerves the world is too much, and who takes refuge in death-bed sentiment about a better world? Not so. St Paul was ready to die, but also he was strong to live. And what he says he means. Those who are Christ's do not merely possess a home beyond the grave; they alone truly possess this world and make it their own. How may we understand this?

It needs but little thought to perceive that ownership does not consist in bare legal possession. Legal rights enable you to keep others out of the enjoyment of your possessions; but there is no kind of proof that this really increases your pleasure in them. With this kind of possession there always goes fear, the fear that they may be taken away. It is only the things that we possess in common with others that we can truly enjoy.

My wealth is common; I possess
No petty province, but the whole;
What's mine alone is mine far less
Than treasure shared by every soul.
Talk not of store,
Millions or more,—
Of values which the purse may hold,—
But this divine!
I own the mine
Whose grains outweigh a planet's gold.[1]

1. Let us, then, reckon up our possessions.

(1) *In the External World.*—The gracious wealth of Nature's beauty is free to all, and yet as much for each as if it were for him alone. What wealth can match the golden rays of the sun, the silver beams of the moon, the copper of the burnished storm-cloud? What music can surpass the heavenly trill of the lark, the robin's song of the falling year, the careless rapture of the wise thrush, the happy sound of running water, the soft whispering of trees, the mournful booming of the restless sea? In these we possess the primitive and exhaustless material out of which all music, all painting, and all poetry have been made. And all these are ours.

And how gracious Nature's ministry can be when sorrow and suffering have touched the heart. The broad earth bares its bosom to our weary head, the gloom of forest glades speaks comfort to our grief, the flowers look up and win a smile even through our tears. And when we say, Ah! things can never be the same again, the morning comes and whispers all is well. Even when our sorrow is of our own making, because we have sinned against ourselves, and the heart is forced to know its own bitterness, then the wind that is wet with the sea comes to make us strong, the lily lifting its head from the black ooze of the stagnant pool speaks of filth made fair, the distant hills bid us lift our heads again, while the night comes down rich with the forgiveness of God. Many wise men have told us that Nature has no forgiveness, no moral message, no revelation of grace; which

[1] D. A. Wasson.

only shows how even wise men fail to realize their possessions.

¶ Everybody who has read Mr Edward Thomas's beautiful life of the young English naturalist, Richard Jefferies, knows how, in his brave fight with a cruel disease and with grinding poverty, Jefferies was comforted every day by the sight of the wild life around him and the sense of its complete and glorious possession. Hear what he says: 'Every blade of grass was *mine*,' he cries exultingly, 'as if I had myself planted it. All the grasses were my pets: I loved them all. Perhaps that was why I never had a pet, never cultivated a flower, never kept a caged bird. Why keep pets when every wild hawk that passed over my head was *mine*? I joyed in his swift, careless flight, in the throw of his pinions, in his rush over the elms and miles of woodland. What more beautiful than the sweep and curve of his going through the azure sky? I see the lark chase his mate over the low stone wall of the ploughed field, to battle with his high-crested rival, to balance himself on his trembling wings, outspread a few yards above the earth, and utter that sweet little loving kiss, as it were, of song. Oh, happy, happy days! So beautiful to watch; and all *mine*!'[1]

(2) *In the Inner World.*—Our possessions are richer still in the inner world. There the past is stored up beyond the possibility of loss. Memory may fail, but that which has really entered into the soul is ours for ever. The scenes we have visited come back in lonely, silent hours, more beautiful than when we looked upon them. The dust and discomfort are forgotten, gone the dreariness and the rain. We are also furnished with rich thoughts from the remotest past. Plato and Æschylus, Virgil and Epictetus, Dante and Shakespeare, have bequeathed to us the vast inheritance of their mighty minds. A thousand experiences become as true to us as if they were our own; the great repentance of David, the brave adventure of Socrates, the fine faith of the Apostle Paul, the sunny happiness of St Francis. There, too, are all the experiences of our lives, the fancies of boyhood, the enthusiasms of youth. So many seem to mourn these as no more. How can they be no more when all their memory and effect remain? The friendships that have been granted us, the love given and the love received, the men and women we have met—these are with us still.

¶ 'Do you remember . . .?'—how naturally the words spring to our lips to-day! We live again through those days of companionship and love, when we shared our secrets and made our plans, when nothing seemed impossible to dream of or to achieve: days when we trod together ground which will be for ever sacred, 'at home'—where every path and tree held its tale of our childhood and of our youth—

> And all the pleasant life they led,
> They three, in that long distant summer-time,
> The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
> And horn, and morn on those delightful hills.[1]

Here, too, live on all the triumphs of success, and, yes, all the defects of failure. But these are purged now of everything save their value; once faced and realized, they teach us more than any success we ever gained. Through all experiences runs a thread of gold, a purpose that was not wholly missed, and can never now be lost.

(3) *An Eternal World.*—These things all open out into an eternal world. A Japanese convert to Christianity was asked what difference it had made to him. He answered, 'It makes the world larger.' It does. What a security and what an interest fall upon our lives when we know that all the tangled issues in them are living issues to Him who sits on the throne of the universe; that He has made them His own; and that in the flesh of a full and completed human experience He has opened unto us a new and living way into the holiest. We may indeed doubt whether

> The acknowledgment of God in Christ
> Accepted by the reason, solves for thee
> All questions in the earth and out of it.

Why should we pretend to know more than we do? Christianity does not answer every question. But neither need it. It does what is better. It brings us, by the costly sacrifice of love, home to the heart of God.

We know now that among our other possessions, nay the reality of all our possessions, is God. He is the living reality in which we move, the love that answers and more than answers

[1] F. W. Boreham, *Mountains in the Mist*, 136.

[1] F. A. Iremonger, *Before the Morning Watch*, 11.

ours. So we possess the rights of companionship, the claims of kinship, spiritual affinity with One who is the source of all personality, the reality of all ideals, the inspiration of all desire. We have no real name for this One, for He is above every name that can be named in earth or heaven. He can be felt more truly than thought, He can be thought more truly than expressed, and He *is* more than all. This is the experience of thousands who have learned to dwell deep. They have entered into possession. But all have the right. Why, then, do they not possess ?

2. What is the secret of possession ?

(1) It is found in renouncing one's rights. We can possess nothing in freedom until we have learned to do without it. So long as we are dependent on any outward thing our souls are in slavery

This is certainly true about material possessions. They are given us to enjoy, but there can be no enjoyment of them while we depend upon them slavishly. Amid all possessions of beauty and comfort a man must be inwardly free, or he will have to lose them all. In the economic Armageddon which many a watcher of the times sees to be approaching those will win who have learned to do without; not the fearful rich or the covetous poor, but all those who are able to say, Let us have justice, and leave the consequences to themselves.

And in a very true sense it is true about God. We depend upon God, but very largely unconsciously, and the reality of our dependence is often found only when we have tried to do without Him. It is natural, too, that it should be those who have renounced their moral right to God who have come to be most sure of Him. This is the eternal truth in evangelical experience. It is only when we have gazed upon a glory we are not fit to share, only when we have pitched our sense of responsibility so high that we have grown conscious of sin and have felt unworthy of the companionship of God—only then do we really begin to possess God for ourselves. It is moral complacency more than anything else that hides God from men's eyes. When this is broken down before the wonderful glory and awful claim of the moral ideal, then men know that the continuance with them of life and light is due to a God with whom personal relations are the goal of all our experience.

(2) It is then that everything comes back re-invested with the Father's love. It is this that makes for the Christian man that sense of guidance which he calls Providence; and it is this that leads to the life of prayer. The whole life becomes the Father's gift. And this is true of all that befalls us. In everything some inner meaning is sought. However forbidding the external wrapping, we know that it contains some good thing from the Father of light. It is for that we look.

Even death is God's gift. All its enmity is taken away. It is not welcome merely because we are tired. It is welcome because we feel a drawing to another and a vaster life. It is not death at all to us :—

> Only a step into the open air
> Out of a tent already luminous
> With light that shines through its transparent walls.

And even things to come are ours. We are living and working for the days that are yet to be. We are laying the foundations of the eternal city. Whatever be the changes that shall come, the work we are doing shall endure. For all things are ours, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come; all are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Death, the Friend

1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.—' All things are yours . . . death.'

Death is ours. We had forgotten that; or, we had not realized it. We had thought that we belonged to death, not death to us. We knew that we had some feeble hold upon life, but death was not thought to be a possession, desirable or undesirable. We had not added that to the catalogue of our wealth. We had never reckoned it among our treasures—among our resources. We had not realized that death is one of our opportunities.

The Apostle carries his confidence in the subservience of all things to Christ's servants very far, and the words of the text, in which he dares to suggest that ' the Shadow feared of man ' is, after all, a veiled friend, are hard to

believe, when we are brought face to face with death, either when we think of our own end, or when our hearts are sore and our hands are empty. Then the question comes—Is it true that this awful force, which we cannot command, does indeed serve us? Did it serve those whom it dragged from our sides; and, in serving them, did it serve us? Paul rings out his 'Yes'; and if we have as firm a hold of Paul's Lord as Paul had, our answer will be the same.

¶ There are two very striking engravings by a great, though somewhat unknown artist, representing Death as the Destroyer and Death as the Friend. In the one case he comes into a scene of wild revelry, and there at his feet lie, stark and stiff, corpses in their gay clothing, and with garlands on their brows, and feasters and musicians are flying in terror from the cowled Skeleton. In the other he comes into a quiet church belfry, where an aged saint sits with folded arms and closed eyes, and an open Bible by his side, and endless peace upon the wearied face. The window is flung wide to the sunrise, and on its sill perches a bird that gives forth its morning song. The cowled figure has brought rest to the weary, and the glad dawning of a new life to the aged, and is a friend.[1]

If we come to analyse the thoughts of humanity about the last act in human life on earth, what is it that makes the dread darkness of death?

1. Death is the entrance to the unknown. It is like a step off the edge of a precipice in a fog; a step into a dim condition of which the Imagination can form no conception, because it has no experience, and all Imagination's pictures are painted with pigments drawn from our past. Whatever may be the defects of the present world, we are at home here, and we know the best and the worst concerning it. But death is the gateway to an unknown land, and we shrink from the thought of a journey to that bourne whence no traveller returns.

But the gospel comes and says, 'It *is* a land of great darkness,' but 'to the people that sit in darkness a great light hath shined.'

> Our knowledge of that life is small,
> The eye of faith is dim.

[1] A. Maclaren.

But faith has an eye, and there is light, and this we can see—One Face whose brightness scatters all the gloom, One Person who has not ceased to be the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His beams. Therefore, one at least of the repellent features which make death a foe, is gone, when we realize that the known Christ fills the Unknown.

¶ When that great soul, Charles Kingsley, lay dying in one room and his wife, dangerously ill in another room, was not expected to recover, their first separation in a married life of unclouded love and confidence—she sent him a message one day, to ask if he thought it cowardly for a poor soul to tremble before the mystery of that unknown world. 'Not cowardly,' was his response, 'but remember it is not darkness we are going to, for God is light; not loneliness, for Christ is with us.'[1]

2. Death apparently removes us from all the wholesome activities and occupations of life. The thought that death is rest does sometimes attract the weary or harassed, or they fancy it does, but that is a morbid feeling, and much more common in sentimental epitaphs than among the usual thoughts of men. To most of us there is no joy, but a chill, in the anticipation that all the forms of activity which have so occupied, and often enriched, our lives here, are to be cut off at once.

But death is not the cessation of activity. It is the introduction to fuller life and nobler opportunities. To die is an experience which is part of life. It is an experience in life's upgrowth and development. There are many whom we know, friends of ours, who always seem to have been thwarted; who seem to be disinherited; who do not seem to have come into their rightful place or possession. If you look at their lives, from the cradle to the certain grave, you cannot understand them. There seems no accomplishment; there seems no real purpose; there seems no achievement worth the travail. But we are not to look at anyone, viewing him merely from the cradle to the grave. Death is our interpreter. It alone gives the true perspective; and when death comes to such, it is seen to be the endowment of the disinherited. Life, its meaning, its purpose, its wealth, is for them beyond the grave. It is beyond the grave for all of us;

[1] J. Burns.

but it is clearly seen to be so for them. Death is the endowment of the disinherited.

¶ In *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, there is a passage regarding death which few of its readers can have forgotten, and there the verse is quoted,

> This our hope for all that's mortal,
> And we too shall burst the bond.
> Death keeps watch beside the portal,
> But 'tis life that dwells beyond.[1]

3. Death separates us from our loved ones. We all know how that function of death is perhaps the one that makes us shrink from it the most, dread it the most, and sometimes hate it the most. Seen from this side, the ministry of death parts a man from dear ones, but if we could see round the turn in the corridor, we should see that the solitude is but for a moment, and that the true office of death is not to part from those beloved on earth but to carry to, and unite with, Jesus and all who love Him.

¶ I always picture Christ standing between us and holding with His right hand so many of His believers and with His left hand so many. He merges us with them. They are in the full light, and we are in the twilight. But we both hold the hand of Christ, and constantly from the left hand to the right hand new souls are passing.[2]

> E'en for the dead I will not bind my soul to grief;
> Death cannot long divide.
> For is it not as though the rose that climbed my garden wall
> Had blossomed on the other side?
> Death doth hide,
> But not divide;
> Thou art but on Christ's other side!
> Thou art with Christ and Christ with me;
> In Christ united still are we.

4. 'The sting of death is sin.' Sin and guilt are uncomfortable companions to take with us into the life beyond. Who can abide the thought of appearing before the great white Throne in filthy garments? Had sin never entered into the world, death would have been simply what Wordsworth says our birth is, 'A sleep and a forgetting.' It would have been, for every one, translation. We should have said of all those who pass hence, 'He was not, for God took him.' It is man's sense of guilt that has invested death with grim terror.

But Christ transforms even this enemy into a friend—that is the message of the Resurrection. By robbing sin of its power, He robs the grave of its terror. The primary work of Christ is to break the fetters of sin, to bring peace to the guilty conscience, and to kindle within us the assurance of forgiveness. When that work is accomplished, death has no more dominion over us. The Christian faces the future without misgiving and without fear. He knows that the Judgment-seat of God lies beyond, but he has made his peace with the Judge.

¶ Jacob Behmen, as he lay dying, said, 'Open the door and let in more of that music.' And the last words of a Spanish monk were, 'I was glad when they said unto me, We will go into the house of the Lord.'[1]

> I have a sin of fear, that when I've spun
> My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
> But swear by Thyself, that at my death Thy Son
> Shall shine as He shines now, and heretofore;
> And having done that, Thou hast done,
> I fear no more.[2]

[1] J. Kelman.
[2] W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Seen and the Unseen*, 186.

The Priesthood of the Laity

1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.—'Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.'

If we search the New Testament for passages bearing on the duties and privileges of the ministry, we shall find that the inspired writers are not at all afraid of magnifying their office as ambassadors of God, while at the same time they humble themselves as bond-servants of men. They are 'ambassadors, but in bonds,' not only when they are suffering persecution, but at all times, inasmuch as they are the bond-servants of their flocks, for Jesus' sake. In the preceding chapter St Paul describes himself and his helpers as 'God's fellow-

[1] H. M. Hughes, *Faith and Progress*, 252.
[2] John Donne.

workers'—an honourable designation indeed for any man to assume. In the passage before us he speaks of their position under a somewhat different aspect—'Let a man so account of us as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.'

1. What are we to understand by 'stewards of mysteries'? The word 'mystery' in the New Testament is always used of the *revelation* of some hidden truth: it means something explained symbolically, not something wrapped up and concealed. And so this verse lends no support to the practice of reserve in imparting religious truth, or to any claim to occult or magical powers on the part of the priesthood. The 'mysteries of God' are the message of salvation in Christ, and the duty of the 'steward' is to keep safe and hand on unimpaired this sacred treasure. The Christian priesthood is quite unlike the Jewish, and it is not till long after the Apostolic period that the Greek words for 'priest' and 'altar' are applied to Christian ministers and the Holy Table. But neither can it be questioned that St Paul regards the clergy as a distinct class or profession, specially called by God to a special work, which carries with it a peculiar authority as well as peculiar obligations. Though we are all servants of God, the clergy are so in a peculiar sense, just as our soldiers are said to 'serve the King,' or 'to serve their country,' in a peculiar sense. Their professional work is the advancement of Christ's Kingdom on earth, just as the professional work of the army is the extension and protection of the British Empire.

Public opinion now demands a much higher standard of clerical life and work than was formerly the case. And in many ways this is a good sign. It shows that the public is interested in religion, and is determined that its 'servants' in the ministry shall give it good work, and set a good example. But there is another side to it which is not so good. There are two ways of combating what is called sacerdotalism. One is by belittling the office of the clergy, the other is by magnifying the office of the laity. The latter is the true method. The 'priesthood of the laity' is a phrase which has the authority of Scripture; and it cannot be too strongly insisted upon, that though Christianity recognizes a separate order of clergy, with duties and powers which do not belong to the laity, yet there is no scriptural authority whatever for a double standard of morality, a strict one for the clergy and a much laxer one for the rest of the Church. We want the higher standard applied to all alike. The priesthood of the laity should be, in its way, as open and visible a thing as the priesthood of the clergy. They also are 'stewards of the manifold grace of God'—not the clergy only.

2. 'It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.' Yes; it is *required*. The time will soon come to each of us when we shall hear the stern, startling summons—'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.' We were sent into the world to live through a few years in it, and to hand on unimpaired the whole of our inheritance as Christians—the form of sound words in which our beliefs are summed up, and the accumulated treasures of centuries of Church life which have modified in countless ways the thoughts, words, and usages of society. These good things were gained by labour, and they cannot be preserved by listless indifference. They cannot be preserved if we are indifferent about religious truth; and this want of seriousness may show itself not only by open neglect, but in two other ways. On the one hand, there is the man who lightly gives his adhesion to the latest 'view,' carried hither and thither by every wind of doctrine: such levity is good neither for finding truth nor for keeping it when found by others. On the other hand, there is the man who accepts his whole creed on authority, and never really makes it his own by earnest thought and discrimination. Such a one is often considered a pillar of the Church, but it is a pillar which can bear no weight upon it. The truth about religion is not so easy to come at as these two classes of men imagine; it must be wrestled for long and earnestly. For though it has been revealed and handed down, each generation must in a sense rediscover it: truth is too precious a thing to be given for nothing.

And then, of course, there is the more private aspect of our stewardship—our use of our time, of our money, of our abilities and opportunities of influence. The best kind of influence is that which is exerted unconsciously upon those who see us every day, and therefore personal holi-

ness—unworldliness, kindness, and a high sense of duty—is the most important part of our embassy from God to our fellows.

¶ A good man's life is the best sermon in the world. The quiet eloquence of deeds and character is far more convincing and uplifting than any mere passing words of human breath. What a strength for good among thousands is a man simple as a child, fearless as the most dashing cavalier, yet tenderly self-sacrificing as the Master who has called him to give himself for others; and what a triumph for the best things is the endeavour which he awakes in hearts of others to imitate him in nobility of character and deed.[1]

¶ 'Whenever I wish to think of a Christian man,' said Jowett once at Newcastle, 'I think of my father. In all our home life I never heard him speak an impatient or an unkind word.'[2]

Ambassadors in bonds we must always be, fettered as we are by false shame, which makes us afraid of avowing Christian motives even when we are acting upon them; fettered also by true shame, when we remember the inconsistencies of our own lives and our many faults, which make us so unfit to help others, and which hinder so grievously the effect of anything we may try to say or do; but let us remember that, though we are in bonds, 'the word of God is not bound'; it is not our own message that we have to give, and sometimes, perhaps, our 'bonds' may be of positive advantage. Can we not fancy the prodigal son warning a younger brother against the courses which had so nearly ruined himself? The elder son, who 'never transgressed at any time his father's commandment,' could not speak with such effect.

3. The grace of which we are stewards is *manifold*, says St Peter. The dispensation of the Spirit is not the same for all. We have gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, that we may each contribute some particular work suitable to our gifts. The man who has received only one talent, despised and obscure, is not to hide it in a napkin, but to make the best of the little that he can do; if we are faithful in a little here we shall have more entrusted to us hereafter.

¶ Our faculties and opportunities are gifts from God, to be used in His service, and for whose right use we are responsible, and must one day give account. No relative insignificance of the gift will be accepted as an excuse for its misuse. We are as accountable for one talent as for ten; for the use of the eleventh hour, as much as for the burden and heat of the day.[1]

Knowing ourselves, our world, our task so great,
Our time so brief, 'tis clear if we refuse
The means so limited, the tools so rude
To execute our purpose, life will fleet,
And we shall fade, and leave our task undone.[2]

Nor must the man with two talents, the ordinary, uninteresting, commonplace man, think that his *aims* also must be commonplace and tame. It is such as he who make up the majority of any nation, and on them it mainly depends whether the ordinary life and work of the community are healthy, strenuous, and moral, or not. 'The blessed work of helping the world forward,' as George Eliot says, 'does not wait to be done by perfect men.'

¶ Charles Reade, in his great romance, says: 'Not a day passes over the earth, but men and women of no note do great deeds, speak great words, and suffer noble sorrows. Of these obscure heroes, philosophers, and martyrs, the greater part will never be known till that hour when many that are great shall be small, and the small great—their lives are hidden away in the annals that record them, a cold record which only the imaginations of a writer of fiction can warm and vivify and make real to the men and women of to-day.'[3]

The man with five talents—the genius, the born leader—of him much is demanded. Not for him a life of quiet happiness, undisturbed by the exacting claims of others and the prickings of faculties unused. If he wins what is called success he will probably have little enjoyment of it. Unresting labour is what God demands of him in return for the capacious brain and the untiring nerves which exalt him above the common weaknesses of humanity.

But whether our gifts be great or small, or neither great nor small, we are all stewards, we are all ambassadors. A treasure is committed to us that we may increase it by judicious use;

[1] L. MacLean Watt.
[2] A. Porritt, *J. H. Jowett*, 6.

[1] J. R. Illingworth.
[2] Browning.
[3] *The Cloister and the Hearth.*

a message is given to us that we may communicate it faithfully, wisely, and prudently. The clergy are, or ought to be, the leaders and directors of this work—they have had a special training for it, and they have leisure to devote themselves entirely to it; but it is not their business only. It is work that we *all* have to share in, as we hope to be saved at the last.

Stewardship

1 Cor. iv. 2.—'Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.'

The insistence on faithfulness in duty, as the condition of obtaining the smile of God, is one of the great marks of Christian ethics. Faithfulness and Love make up the whole. And that is a comfort. For this reason, that faithfulness is the one virtue within reach of us all. Endowment and opportunity make many things impossible for us. Great service we cannot give. Into some regions of work we cannot enter at all. For some men, for instance, the advancement of mathematical knowledge is a sheer impossibility. To some scientists the region of philosophy lies behind a closed door. St John never can give the service of St Paul. But faithful exercise of such powers as we have we can all attain unto; those who deal in the little as well as those who deal in the much; the peasant as well as the peer. So it is a comfort that Christianity puts so much emphasis on faithfulness.

But, on second thoughts, is it so very comforting? For faithfulness is a very pure virtue, high and lifted up. Who of us can say that, up to this day, we have done our best? We all know perfectly well that what we mainly regret is just our lack of faithfulness. The fact is that faithfulness, while it is in the reach of all, is in the grasp of few. That great old man, Dr Temple, knew what he was talking about, when, in speaking once about emotional religion, he said that the ideal ought rather to be to develop a quiet sense of duty. The *ideal*, observe. That is why Christ's insistence on faithfulness has its alarming, as well as its comforting, side. For faithfulness He will have. It is *required* in stewards that a man be faithful. We are all stewards, more or less, and 'required' is the word that is used.

¶ Professor Bradley insists upon the faithfulness of Shakespeare. It is the fidelity of Shakespeare, in a mind of extraordinary power, he says, that has really made Shakespeare what he is. The same is true of Sir Walter Scott. It is written on every page of his journal. If there ever was a man who was faithful unto death, faithful to honour, to duty, to work, and to God, it was that hero who so loved his country, and died beside the murmur of the Tweed. Yes, one mark of all the greatest is a fidelity which is sublime. No gifts, no brilliance, no genius can release a man from being faithful. Not in the things we do but how we do them, not in fame but in fidelity, is the true test of a man's work, according to the teaching of our Lord.[1]

1. *What do we mean by faithfulness?* Perhaps we might define it as the complete use of our powers and opportunities towards what we recognize as the highest end. It does not imply unclouded vision of the will of God concerning us. It implies the unwavering use of our possibilities towards the accomplishment of certain subsidiary, temporal ends, which are our daily work and service. As regards these a man may make a mistake as to God's will for him. But, even if he does, his power of faithfulness is not diminished. He considers all his circumstances—those who are dependent on him, the line most open to him for work—and he selects, or finds selected for him, a subsidiary end in daily work, as a baker, or a doctor, or a minister of religion. As far as he can see, to that lesser end, he is hedged in. Likewise, he considers what voluntary service he may render. Taking account of his health, and his home duties, and his financial resources, and his faculties, he becomes a teacher, or a Boy's Brigade officer, or a tenor in a choir. It is in regard to these two subsidiary ends, which he has chosen with the best judgment at his command, that he may exhibit faithfulness.

2. But so far we are dwelling on the surface of faithfulness. Let us ask *what is involved in faithfulness.*

In regard to this there are hints that we may obtain from the original word in Greek, from the images employed by Jesus, and from the English word itself. From the first of these

[1] G. H. Morrison.

we learn that the master idea in the original word is, in respect of persons, 'trustworthiness,' and, in respect of commodities, 'genuineness' or 'unadulteratedness.' The latter idea casts light upon the former. An unfaithful person is like sugar with sand in it, or milk with an undue admixture of water. That is to say, faithfulness, applied to a person, contains the suggestion of *sincerity*.

Further, there are the images employed by Jesus. You remember that in the Parables one man was entrusted with a talent; another was entrusted with a pound. And then the Lord speaks of a stewardship. Thus, faithfulness is a word which can be applied to persons who are given a temporary use of something for another's advantage.

And, again, there is a hint in the word faithfulness itself. Split it up into its component parts and you get 'fullness of faith.' Now 'faith' here means 'keeping to an agreement.' It is the grand old word 'troth.' That is to say, it hints not only at a stewardship, but at a stewardship to the terms of which we have agreed.

Now, put these suggestions together and what do we find? That at the back of faithfulness there is *honour*. We are given that which is not our own, for purposes that are another's; and only he that is honestly faithful fulfils his trust.

¶ In *The Secret Agent* Conrad describes a native chief in one of the British colonies 'whom it was a tradition for the successive colonial governors to trust and make much of as a firm friend and supporter of the order and legality established by white men; whereas, when examined sceptically, he was found out to be principally his own good friend, and nobody else's. Not precisely a traitor, but still a man of many dangerous reservations in his fidelity, caused by a due regard for his own advantage, safety, and comfort.'[1]

3. *Whence does this faithfulness spring?* Does it, so to speak, grow of itself; or is there a source behind, a soil in which it flowers? To find the answer to that question, contrast the use of words in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. And this is what we discover—that the word 'faithfulness' is used frequently in the Old Testament, but that it occurs not one solitary time in the New. Now, that is a very suggestive fact. It shows how deep the New Testament has cut. The New Testament gets right down to the root-source of honourable contract-keeping towards God, when, where an Old Testament writer would use 'faithfulness,' it trumpets out its great, majestic word 'faith.' He that would be faithful, must, in the deepest sense, be full of faith. Now faith is trust which includes the assent and movement of the will. Trust in God, in Christ, and genuine effort to express in life our trust go to compose that faith whereby we know them that are His.

When shall we all be made to realize that a belief which does not issue forth in deeds and in a life is not a belief, and that there is no more sense in claiming credit for a belief which has no practical outcome than there would be in a man taking credit to himself for some dream in which he seemed to himself to be a king or a great hero? In the days that lie before us let us understand more clearly that we Christians are here in this world to penetrate the world with our ideas and to inspire all human laws and practices and institutions with our spirit.

Christian people, says St Paul in effect, ought to embody in the very habits of their life, in their speech, in their declared preferences, in their dealings with one another as they pass through this world, two moral qualities. For one thing, they should always be found faithful. And for another thing, they should never forget that they are stewards, trustees, of a certain spiritual deposit or tradition which it is their chief obligation to transmit unreduced to the generation which is rising to meet them.

These are two searching and final tests, which together are likely to lead to the very noblest type of human excellence. 'A man shall be found faithful'—that is the very pillar of character: its presence the very salt of human intercourse. God likes a man, says the fifteenth Psalm, who stands by his word. It may cost him something to stand by his word. It may hurt him. It may make him poor, or deprive him of a friend; but in his heart and conscience he will be rich. And it is good exchange to lose something on earth for the sake of something in heaven.

But, leaving these considerations on one side, let us be reminded of one simple fact. There is a part played in this business by God. The

[1] J. Moffatt in *The Expositor*, Jan. 1925.

word 'faithful' is applied in the Bible not only to men but to their Master. 'God is faithful by whom ye were called.' 'Faithful is he that calleth you.' 'He is faithful that has promised.' That is to say, the God who demands faithfulness is faithful in aiding them that desire it. There is a bargain between Him and us; and His part of the bargain will be fulfilled. Let us, then, lean more on Him, through whom even this so splendid virtue may be possessed by the children of men.

The Three Tribunals

1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.—'But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord' (R.V.).

Dr Stalker, in a suggestive address on this subject, says that in every man there are four men—the man the world sees, the man seen by the person who knows him best, the man seen by himself, and the man whom God sees. These are the four men brought before us in this verse. 'It is a very small thing that I should be judged by you,' that is the judgment by his friends, 'or of man's judgment,' that is the world's criticism: 'Yea, I judge not mine own self,' that is his own criticism: 'but he that judgeth me is the Lord.' We can reduce the four to three by taking the first two together as 'the judgment of the world.'

1. *The Judgment of the World.*—The world about us is always judging us. Never was the critical faculty more constantly employed in all directions than it is to-day. As Dean Church remarks: 'From morning to night we are passing judgment upon the living and the dead, the known and the unknown, the remote and the near. Men of all classes, nations, and ages rise up in constant judgment upon one another, and fling their criticisms at each other as though they were unquestionable certainties.'

(1) There is a natural desire in every man's breast to stand well in the judgment of his fellows, and to reap the well-earned reward of public esteem, and St Paul would have been the last man ever to depreciate so honourable an ambition. 'Why, then,' it might be asked, 'does he say that he considers it a small thing that he is judged of man's judgment?' Because he would not have us overestimate the value of public criticism, but look beyond the world's fluctuating judgment for any final criterion of character. He knew only too well how mistaken and also how seductive the world's judgment might be. He knew how fickle, fallible, and uncertain was this thing that we call public opinion.

¶ In Nathaniel Hawthorne's greatest book, *The Scarlet Letter*, we have an illustration of the way in which the judgment of the world may be mistaken. Hester Prynne for her sin was compelled to stand in the pillory with that Scarlet Letter 'A' upon her breast, which proclaimed to the world her deep and bitter shame. And the partner of her sin was the clergyman, Arthur Dimmesdale. But the world never guessed. Arthur Dimmesdale lived in the odour of sanctity. For his learning and eloquence and piety he was the pride of the community to which he ministered—though all the time he knew in his own heart that he ought to be standing in the same pillory with Hester with a Scarlet Letter on his breast too, to declare his sin and shame.[1]

We must not, however, underrate the importance of public opinion. It has a real work to do in human life. As Canon Liddon once said: 'It acts in the world of thought and conduct as does the policeman in the streets; it is there to keep outward order,' to support and direct that which is just and good. Very few of us are aware of the reinforcements which our virtue receives from the pressure of our neighbour's opinion, and the persistent impact of the moral sense that is diffused in the social atmosphere in which we move. The organized life of which we are part presses us into place and keeps our feet in the routine of duty.

¶ On the entrance hall of Marischal College, Aberdeen, may be read this quaint old motto: 'Thay haif said: Quhat say thay: Lat thame say.' Now there are times when that is the right, the necessary spirit. But let us make no mistake. Habitually to ignore and set at nought what other people think *may* be as foolish and as fatal as habitually to consult and wait upon it. *Athanasius contra mundum*—it is a magnificent phrase, and it stands for a great truth; but I fear it has to answer for

[1] J. D. Jones, *The Unfettered Word*, 247.

a good deal of stupid and obstinate wrong-headedness which does not always get called by its proper name.[1]

But the danger for most of us does not lie in defiance of public opinion, but rather in a tame subservience, a too ready compliance with the ways and thoughts of the world about us. Is there anything that we need more in every department of life to-day than that spirit of sturdy, uncompromising independence which breathes through these words of the Apostle: 'With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment; he that judgeth me is the Lord'? We want men, like him, who fear God and who have no other fear.

¶ Take the case of the famous Francis Bacon. In sheer intellectual might he stands, in our nation at least, with the one exception of Shakespeare, without a peer. And yet, notwithstanding all his magnificent gifts, we see him stooping to almost incredible meanness and perfidy, suffering himself to become the abject tool of a wretch like Buckingham, a mere 'chessman,' as he himself put it, in the hand of a monarch so weak and contemptible as James I. What is the explanation? Why this strange mingling of mud and marble, of meanness and magnificence? Let Dean Church, who of all Bacon's critics has, perhaps, understood him best, answer: 'There was,' he says, 'in Bacon's "self" a deep and fatal flaw, *He was a pleaser of men*.'

(2) The man, as his friends see him, may be quite a different man from the man the world sees. Sometimes they see a better, sometimes a worse man. But at any rate their criticism will be more penetrating and sure.

¶ I once had a friend. The popular opinion about him was that he was very quiet and rather dull, without ideas, or experience, or character of his own. Such was the man the world saw. But the man I saw was quite a different being—a man of the most genial humour, who could break into conversation the most lively and discursive or the most serious and profound, with a mind richly stored with unusual knowledge, fertile imagination, and a moral nature which had passed through all the great experiences of the human soul and all the peculiar experiences of our new time.[2]

[1] G. Jackson.
[2] J. Stalker.

Ah, but that's the world's side, there's the wonder,
Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you.
There, in turn, I stand with them and praise you,
But the best is when I glide from out them,
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
Come out on the other side, the novel
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

But if the too severe judgments of others are hard for us to bear, their too favourable judgments are far more perilous to us. We are so apt to assume that all the pleasant things said about us are true, to be satisfied with approbation which we know to be nothing but superficial. We each, no doubt, if we choose, know our own weaknesses and our own sins; perhaps they are unknown to every one else, perhaps they are known only to some few of our friends. Yet if we seem to be accepted by those who do not know them, with favourable judgment and trusting affection—perhaps respected and loved for our external pleasantness, treated as we know we should not be treated if they knew our real inner selves—is it not a dangerous temptation to us to accept the affection and the approbation as our true merit, and to forget the weakness or the sin that is not known?

Greatly his foes he dreads, but more his friends;
He hurts me most who lavishly commends.[1]

2. *Our Judgment of Ourselves.*—The judgments of conscience are infinitely deeper and truer than the judgments of the world. Indeed, if we could get a conscience absolutely true, its judgments would be absolutely valid. For conscience, as Theodore Parker used to say, is just 'the voice of God within.' The judgments of a perfectly sensitive conscience would agree with the judgments of God Himself. But no conscience is absolutely sensitive or true. Conscience has suffered in the general twist human nature received through sin. In some it has been seared and silenced; in all it has been dulled and blunted, so that the judgments of conscience can no longer be trusted as absolutely true judgments. St Paul had a good conscience; as he says in this text, 'I know nothing

[1] Churchill, *The Apology*.

against myself,' and yet he was not going to put his trust in the verdict of approval pronounced by conscience. He knew his conscience was no infallible judge. 'Yet,' he says, 'am I not hereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord.'

If the world's judgment upon a man is faulty and untrustworthy, so is a man's judgment of himself. The man who really knew himself best would be the first to acknowledge that our judgment of ourselves is far too partial to be fair, far too blind to be accurate, far too indulgent to be morally bracing. The superficiality and fallibility of all human judgments instinctively provoke within us the demand for a final Court of Appeal.

¶ There is little doubt that anyone who knew Dr M'Laren well would agree with the statement that the most marked feature in his character was his entire freedom from anything approaching to egotism. His deep vein of shyness, as well as refined taste, made egotism, in the way of speaking of his own doings, an impossibility to him. But his want of egotism had a deeper source. It was the result of genuine deep-rooted humility. He knew that in many directions unusual powers had been given him, but this conviction led to no undue elation. Gifts brought responsibility, and conscience told of failure as to their use. He never perhaps took part in a meeting in the Free Trade Hall when the large building was not filled to its utmost capacity, and for years before the close of his career, almost invariably the immense audience rose to receive him and cheered enthusiastically. Once, driving home from one of these meetings, his companion ventured to ask him if he could recall what his thoughts were as he stood waiting till the applause had ceased—a far-away, almost pained expression had been noticed. 'Yes,' he said, 'perfectly; I all but heard the words, "It is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; he that judgeth me is the Lord."'[1]

3. *The Lord's Judgment of Us.*—There is only one tribunal whose judgment is final and conclusive because perfectly true, and that is the tribunal of Christ. It is to that judgment-seat Paul made his appeal. 'He that judgeth me is the Lord.' There are two reasons that make our Lord's judgments final and true: (1) He knows what is in man. He looks behind the outward act to the inner motive. He pierces through the external behaviour to the thoughts and intents of the heart. He is not deceived by appearances—He 'looketh upon the heart.' (2) Our Lord's faculty of moral judgment is perfect. *Our* capacity for moral judgment has been injured by sin. But Jesus did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. This is what makes our Lord's judgments true and His verdicts final—His faculty of judgment is flawless and perfect, for He is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. This is the one and only competent and authoritative tribunal—the judgment-seat of Christ. '*Ad tribunal tuum, Jesu Christe, appello*'—'to thy tribunal, Jesus Christ, I appeal,' said Pascal. To that tribunal we too must bring ourselves.

¶ The governor of a Crown Colony may attach some importance to colonial opinion, but he reports home; and it is what the people in Downing Street will say that he thinks about. We have to report home; and it is the King whom we serve to whom we have to give an account.[1]

[1] E. T. M'Laren, *Dr M'Laren of Manchester*, 207.

Humility

1 Cor. iv. 7.—'For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?'

THERE is a good deal of vagueness as to what Christian humility means. It is a commonplace that the virtue, as taught in Christian ethics, was a new one; that neither the word nor the thing was recognized by pagan moralists. And it is very generally assumed that humility is one of the characteristic marks which distinguish Christianity, as an ideal of character, from humanism. The Christian, as Cardinal Newman put it, is humble; the humanist can only achieve the spurious imitation called modesty. But the jealous vindication of certain virtues as peculiar to Christianity is not a very scientific or a very profitable method of apologetics. The great river of Christianity has received many affluents from secular civilization, and has no reason to be ashamed

[1] A. Maclaren.

of the fact; nor, on the other hand, can humanism ever again be the same as it was before the figure of Christ, crowned with thorns, brought to an end the boyhood of the human race. It would be a poor compliment to our religion if we could point to any living force of secular civilization as untouched by its influence; and we need not envy the acuteness of the casuist who can detect a generic difference between the modesty which is born of self-respect and the humility which is born of contrition. The two are surely only different aspects of the same fine quality in the soul.

But however this may be, it is historically true that from the first there has been a current of moral protest against what has been understood to be the Christian ideal of virtue, and that this protest has fixed on 'humility' as the centre of the teaching to which objection has been taken. From the end of the second century to the days of Gibbon and Voltaire and our own time, the charge has been brought against Christianity that it condemns honourable ambition, encourages men to shirk positions of responsibility, to obey rather than to lead, to pray rather than to work, and, in a word, to serve God by *not* serving humanity. It is interesting to remember that there was another anti-patriotic creed, in the eyes of the Roman government—that of Epicurus; and that Diocletian ordered the works of the apostle of pleasure to be burnt in the same fire which consumed the Christian Gospels and Epistles. It was a curious juxtaposition; but the emperor and his advisers thought that these two effeminate creeds had reached the same anti-social goal from opposite sides, and might reasonably be treated in the same fashion. There are people who still think that the Christian ideal of virtue is essentially a poor type—'an apotheosis of the feminine and servile virtues,' as a modern writer puts it.

¶ In one of his so pathetic letters the poet Keats says, 'I hate humility.' We have only to read the context of that letter to discover what he meant by that. He meant that grovelling and cringing spirit which Heine called the virtue of a hound, and which is immortalized in English literature in the portrait of Uriah Heep. That is what Aristotle would have called humility. That is what Cicero would have called humility. And there are multitudes still who have a lurking feeling that if not the truth it is very near the truth.[1]

We may consider the charge either historically, judging the tree by its fruits, or by an impartial study of the sources—the teaching of Christ and His apostles as we have it in the New Testament.

1. Historically, there is no doubt that Christianity at first spread mainly among the oppressed classes, and that it owed much of its early success to the fact that it gave a moral and religious sanction to the revolt against unjust privilege, whether of race, sex, or condition, which accompanied and perhaps hastened the break up of the old order of civilization. The charge of anti-patriotism, brought by the inheritors of the old Roman tradition, is thus perfectly intelligible. The Church was the powerful ally of forces which were undermining the old social order. But the historian must admit that this disintegrating aspect of Christianity was a purely accidental and temporary one. Nothing can prove this better than the subsequent complete reincarnation of the spirit of Roman imperialism in the Roman hierarchy, when the Church showed itself only too eager to possess the earth, and to rule the nations more despotically than the temporal power had ever done. A few centuries later other typical developments of Christianity appeared in the Spaniards of the fifteenth century, the English Puritans, and the Dutch, whose virtues and vices have by no means been of the servile and effeminate type.

It is, however, a very remarkable thing, that, while Christianity was thus showing its power to act as a world-ruling principle, the ideal type of Christian piety remained unchanged for one thousand years from what it was in the third and fourth centuries. This was entirely due to the fact that, from the third century onwards, the Church encouraged, in the hermits and monks, a class of professional saints, whose function it was to give a practical demonstration of the religious, in sharp contrast to the secular, life. It is a very superficial view which condemns the career of the saint as useless or selfish; but the pursuit of holiness, in detachment from all secular ties and duties, has the defects and limitations of

[1] G. H. Morrison.

all specializing. Jesus Christ came to teach us how to live in the world, not out of it; the typical Christian is not the monk, but the man who in his life as a citizen, and as a family man, can keep himself as pure as if 'prayer' were 'all his labour, all his pleasure, praise.'

2. Let us now turn to the New Testament, and ask what humility means in the Gospels and Epistles. With regard to our Lord Himself, we need not be afraid of taking Him as our example in humility as in other things, in spite of the uniqueness of His position; for He said Himself, 'Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart.' In what sense then, we may ask, was Jesus Christ meek and lowly? Not, certainly, in the sense of repudiating the right to lead and command. 'Ye call me master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.' Not, certainly, in readiness to accept unasked advice from unconstituted authority. The rebuke, 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' when Simon Peter wished to turn Him from His purpose, is perhaps the sharpest in the Gospels; and, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' in reply to His mother's suggestion, is beyond doubt a rebuke, though not (as it sounds in English) a discourteous one. No, the man who follows where he ought to lead, who takes advice where he ought to give it, who 'makes from cowardice the great refusal' in any form, may flatter himself that he is humble; but his is not the humility of Christ.

Nor do we reach the foundation of our Saviour's humility when we dwell on such object-lessons as the washing of the disciples' feet, much as we may learn from that scene in the upper chamber. Not self-abasement but loving service is the keynote of that chapter of St John. Looking at our Lord's character from the human side, may we not say that its mainspring was the simple, whole-hearted acceptance of His mission—'I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me,'—the complete and loving trust and confidence in His Father, which made Him willing to say with the Psalmist, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God,' leaving all the rest in God's hands. If Christ is our example, it is in self-surrender, not in self-contempt, that we are to find the essence of humility.

The humility of St Paul rests on the same basis. The most instructive passage is that of our text: 'Who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? but if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?' He does not counsel us to hate or despise ourselves, but only 'not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think; to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.' If we must put a value on ourselves at all, let it be a sober and true one; but it is not our business to appraise ourselves, for better or for worse.

'What hast thou that thou didst not receive?' St Paul asks us. How absolutely true this is, however we look at it! Which of the qualities on which we plume ourselves is not, almost demonstrably, due to heredity, or to an environment which we neither made nor chose for ourselves? 'If, then, thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?' We ought instead to do our best to find out just what gifts God has given us, accepting quite simply and humbly the fact that there are one or two things which we can probably do well, and that we were meant to find out what they are, that we may do them well for the glory of God and the good of our neighbours.

¶ Ruskin says: 'I believe that the first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean by humility doubt of his own power, hesitation of speaking his opinions, but a right understanding of the relation of what he can do and say to the rest of the world's doings and sayings. All great men not only know their business, but usually know that they know it; they are not only right in their main opinions, but they usually know that they are right in them; *only they do not think much of themselves on that account.* . . . They have a curious sense of powerlessness, feeling that the greatness is not in them, but through them—that they could not do or be anything else than God made them; and they see something Divine and God-made in every man they meet, and are endlessly, foolishly, incredibly merciful.'

We need not be afraid that the process of self-knowledge will not be also a lesson in humility. Plutarch tells us that at the university of Athens the students generally began by being wise men, then lovers of wisdom or philosophers, then orators, and ended their course by becoming ordinary kind of people;

'the more they had to do with learning, the more they laid aside their pride and high estimate of themselves.' Plutarch's story sounds like the joke of a genial but cynical old professor; but it is the simple truth that readiness to be taught is the proof and condition of wisdom, just as willingness to serve is the proof and condition of greatness; and if the effect of university education, whether at Athens or Oxford, is to turn the 'wise man' of nineteen into an 'ordinary kind' of person four years later, it speaks well for the value of university education. God teaches His way to the humble, and resisteth the proud, all through life.

Receptivity

1 Cor. iv. 7.—'What hast thou that thou didst not receive?'

1. Circumstances are very different to-day from what they were in that little church of Corinth; our outlook is different, our insight is far deeper, we are served heirs of the Christian wealth of all the centuries: yet one may question if ever there was a time when men had more need of listening to this text, 'What hast thou that thou didst not receive?' 'Receptiveness,' George Eliot says, 'is a noble and massive virtue.' And however eminent this age may be, however many the crowns upon its brow, its warmest champion would scarcely maintain that it is noted for its receptivity. There are two tendencies which are characteristic of this present time, and which make it hard to write the text upon our banner.

(1) This is an *inventive* age.—It is an age of marvellous invention and discovery. Think of our motors and aeroplanes: think of our telephones and wireless: think of our new conceptions of Nature, and of our new comprehension of the past, if you would find the spirit of the age. Into that spirit we are all baptized. In every one of us, perhaps quite unconsciously, there is a touch of the inventor's and the discoverer's temper. That is to say, we are bred in the idea that all that is best and highest and most noble has to be won by human search and seeking. Does that then make us arrogant? Not so. Does it puff us up like the poor church at Corinth? Not so. But it makes it hard for us to realize that we do not find the best—the best finds us. It makes it hard to remember that the things which count are after all not wages but gifts. We think we discover God—we find Him out—and we breathe the spirit of the age in thinking that; but what we forget is that ere we discover God, God in His mercy has discovered us. What have we that we have not accomplished? What have we that we have not toiled for? There would be something in *that* very congenial to the modern spirit. But the side of things with which we are out of touch is, 'What have we that we did not receive?'

(2) This is a *critical* age. Every one of us is well aware of that. We have only to open our weekly reviews and magazines, or to scan our publishers' announcements, to find how in the world of literature this is emphatically a day of criticism. It is not so much a day of books as a day of books about books. It is the age, too, of the higher criticism, when every line of Scripture is dissected, when every document is microscopically handled, and when every doctrine is thrown into the crucible. God has His critical and His constructive periods, and He has made everything beautiful in its time. But the critical spirit even at its noblest is very far away from receptivity. It is one thing to weigh and analyse: it is another thing simply to receive. When we are accustomed to get at truth by fine dissection, it is not easy to regard it as a gift. So springs the danger of being very blind to-day to the truth here emphasized by Paul.

2. There are various ways in which we may apply the words of the text.

(1) Think first of *the world of Nature*. We vex ourselves continually with the old problems of how the world came to be created. We fight over again the battle of the six days: we read and re-read our books on evolution—until sometimes the glory which is spring, and the joy and sunshine which are summer, and the rich loveliness which is autumn pass us by, and give us not one word of benediction, we are so restless with our questionings. Such questionings are right and they are noble. They are part of the penalty we pay for knowledge. But behind them all there is a great fact that none can ever question. However the world was created or evolved, here it is, a

glad and glorious gift. We did not fashion one blade of grass in it, the labours of our hands were never asked; we were born and opened our eyes and it was there: some one had given it to us as a gift. We invent the telegraph, we do not invent the Spring. We discover the power of steam, but not the dawn. These things find us, they are given freely: they come to us in all their glory, gratis: and the keenest intellect will fail to grasp the true value of this great creation, unless there come seasons when it can let alone, and practise the great grace of receptivity. What have ye that ye did not receive? Loch, mountain, moor, sunset and evening star.

¶ There is a spirit in mountain, stream, and wood; and to get at that spirit we must go out of self and listen to that still, small voice, often the merest whisper, that will come to us if only we bring 'the heart that watches and receives'—a heart empty of self, humbly eager to trace the ways of Eternal Love and Wisdom in the perishing forms of time.[1]

(2) Think again of *our capacities and faculties.* In that searching parable which we call the Parable of the Talents there is one word which we are apt to overlook. We lay full emphasis upon the trading with the talents, but we neglect that word at the beginning—gave. 'Unto one he *gave* five talents, to another two, and to another one'—the greatest endowments, and the least, were gifts—and our Lord was so consummately careful of His words and chose them with such exquisite exactitude, that we may believe there was a depth of meaning to His mind in the thought that the talents were not won but given. Was it by your toil—the labour of your hands—that your brain acquired its marvellous power of thinking? Was it your skill that built the picture-gallery which we call so lightly the imagination? Whence did our eye get its wonderful power of seeing, our ear of hearing or our hand of touching? Did we toil for these things, and win them by hard task-work, and grope with pain till we had reached their secret?—unto one he *gave* five talents, to another two. If God has denied the delightful gift of beauty, all Paris and London are powerless to produce it. If God has not given the boon of a sweet voice, the training of twenty years will not create it.

[1] E. Herman, *The Touch of God*, 202.

¶ I never saw anyone so strongly impressed with the consciousness that a natural faculty is *a gift.* '*Ce n'est pas un mérite; c'est un don*' was, in various ways, constantly expressing itself. She said she never sang without reflecting that it might be for the last time; and that it was continued to her, from year to year, for the good of others.[1]

We talk of self-reliance and self-culture, and with honest pride we speak of self-made men: but back of all our trading with the talents there are the talents themselves, and these are given before we ever ask them. The possibility of all we do lies not in what we do but in what we get. Our gifts are the only basis of our gains. It is well sometimes that we should all be still, and shut our books and lay aside our microscopes, and say to ourselves in secret meditation, What have we that we did not receive?

(3) Nor can we forget that thanks to the *increasing knowledge of the centuries,* there are deeper meanings in the text for us, than were perceived by Paul. It is one mark, indeed, of all inspired writing that it expands with the expanding experience of time, and that it breaks continuously into larger meaning under the touch of growing thought and life. For what is heredity but the expansion by science of this inspired word? What motto for the text-books of heredity could match this motto, 'What have ye that ye did not receive?' Whence come the bent and bias of my nature? Why am I tempted to this and not to that? Whence is it that certain virtues are so easy to me, and others so incredibly hard? The basis of all my strength and all my weakness, of all I battle with, of all I hope to be—the basis of it is the unsought-for gift of the generations who have passed and died. We hear it sometimes said when a man dies, 'So-and-so has left practically nothing.' But the poorest man leaves practically everything, for in the strictest of all senses he bequeathes himself. A man's true legacy is not his money but what he has been; for this, far more certainly than any thousands, shall be inherited by children's children.

¶ Few men who have done good in the world have not been born to the capacity for it. It takes more than one generation to make a

[1] H. S. Holland and W. S. Rockstro, *Jenny Lind, the Artist*, ii. 173.

consummate individual, and the life that leaps upon the world like a cataract is often fed from some remote and lonely tarn of which the world never hears the name. Henry Drummond's forebears were men who lived a clean and honest life in the open air, who thought seriously, and had a conscience of service to the community. As he inherited from one of them his quick eye for analogies between the physical and the spiritual laws of God, so it was his parents and grandparents who earned for him some at least of the ease and winsomeness of his piety.[1]

(4) Then, lastly, let us apply our text to *the great gospel of the love of God.* All love is a gift; we cannot compel or force it; it is only love when it is freely given: and if that is true of the love of man and woman it must be true of the love of God to us. Now the New Testament throbs and thrills with the glad thought that the gospel is a gift. 'Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.' 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' 'If any man will open the door.' 'Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.' This was the good news that thrilled the world after the baffled search of Greece and Rome—that love and deathless hope and power and liberty were to be taken as a free gift from heaven.

We long and strive and toil for the best: but all that is best does not begin in striving; it comes as a gift from God and must be taken. Spring is a gift, and Summer is a gift, and song and music and genius and love: why should God alter when it comes to Jesus, and give Him only to our weary toil? We receive the sunshine and we receive the melody. Is it not rational that we should receive Christ Jesus?

At the devil's booth are all things sold,
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;
For a cap and bells our lives we pay,
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking:
'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking;
No price is set on the lavish summer;
June may be had by the poorest comer.[2]

[1] G. A. Smith, *The Life of Henry Drummond*, 4.
[2] Lowell, *The Vision of Sir Launfal.*

In Praise of Folly

1 Cor. iv. 10.—'We are fools for Christ's sake.'

Throughout Revelation foolishness is reprobated equally with wickedness; indeed, folly is a word continually used as a synonym for wickedness. Disobedience to the moral commandment is equivalent to playing the fool. In harmony with all the sacred writers, St Paul enjoins practical wisdom, sharply rebuking those whose conduct is lacking in judgment and dignity. Thus the Ephesians are admonished: 'Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise. . . .' Writing to Titus, he implies the obligation of the Christian to act with thoughtfulness and circumspection. 'We also were aforetime foolish' (iii. 3). And, finally, the Apostle resents that he himself should be charged with folly. 'I say again, Let no man think me a fool' (2 Cor. xi. 16). He was jealous of his reputation as a rational, self-respecting disciple of his great Master.

Yet, just as distinctly does the Apostle avow his readiness for Christ's sake to be accounted a fool. And let it be remembered here that we feel the dishonour of this imputation more perhaps than we feel any other. Generally speaking, men would rather be designated sinners than fools. The criticism in a Victorian play that a certain course of action is 'not merely wicked, it is foolish' is quite a real note. Nevertheless, the Apostle is ready to accept this odium. He has already borne much for Christ's sake, much that was very hard to bear, and now he is prepared to bear this hardest thing of all.

Let us consider, then, on what grounds, and in what sense, the Apostle was ready to suffer derision, and what was the nature of the apology that he offered for himself.

1. The primary ground of offence was found in the fact that the Apostle recognized as real a sphere that his critics altogether failed to see; and that, in consequence, he accounted of supreme importance what to them was absolutely incredible. One of the ancients has said, 'That which is best is always hard to be found out, hard to be judged.' But St Paul not only perceived and judged what was best in the sensible world, he discerned the

best and highest of a kingdom transcending the realm of the senses. Therefore he was a fool in the reckoning of the materialistic leaders of thought, because they failed to apprehend the heavenly vision which so completely dominated his thought and life. He saw what they did not see; heard what they did not hear; knew and felt what they had no conception of.

¶ In all ages it has been the fate of genius to be judged as a species of madness, and by the mass accounted folly. Columbus was despised as a visionary. Palissy was tolerated with the smile of pity. Great musicians were reckoned amiable enthusiasts who wasted the paper on which they wrote immortal scores. Gordon was accounted half-crazed. Murchison was voted a mild lunatic obsessed by worthless pebbles. Did not Darwin's gardener think his master somewhat of a driveller, spending hours gazing at a flower, and not much of a flower at that? Because these sons of insight and prescience had vision amazing of what their fellows failed to see they were classed as victims of hallucination, and sneered at by common-sense. Time, however, has done them justice.[1]

Our Lord shows with whom the want of reason lies. 'I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?' The greatest Teacher declares that the most fatuous conduct of which we can be guilty is to ally the abiding element of our nature with the fashion of a world that passeth away. So St Paul, in preferring the higher truths by which men live, had a method in his madness which altogether redeemed it.

¶ William Blake once remarked of Lawrence and other prosperous artists: 'They pity me, but 'tis they who are the just objects of pity; I possess my visions and peace. They have bartered their birthright for a mess of pottage.' And again he said, 'Were I to love money I should lose all power of thought, and my business is not to gather gold, but to make glorious shapes expressing godlike sentiments.'[2]

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *Moral Paradoxes of St Paul*, 79.
[2] F. Homes Dudden.

Ah, there be souls none understand,
Like clouds, they cannot touch the land,
Drive as they may by field or town.
Then we look wise at this, and frown,
And we cry, 'Fool!' and cry, 'Take hold
Of earth, and fashion gods of gold!'

Call these not fools; the test of worth
Is not the hold you have on earth.
Lo, there be gentlest souls, sea blown,
That know not any harbour known;
And it may be the reason is
They touch on fairer shores than this.[1]

2. The second ground on which the Apostle's rationality was impugned was the character of his gospel. That the highest revelation of the Supreme should be found at Calvary, that the redemption of the world was effected there, was sheerest nonsense to the classic people.

The Apostle shows the failure of their philosophy—how they had not attained to the knowledge of God. So far as the philosophers themselves were concerned, God had never become more to them than an idea, a vague, unfruitful idea. He was a subject for their metaphysics, a theme for their poetry, an ideal for their arts, but of no practical, vitalizing interest either to them or to the multitude; whilst, indeed, many of them denied the Deity altogether, or despaired of knowing anything concerning Him. In opposition to this bankruptcy of pagan philosophy, St Paul proclaimed a gospel in which the abstract idea of Deity had passed into a knowledge of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: in which the righteousness of God, the heart of God, the glorious purpose of God concerning the race, were brought home to men with inspiring and transforming power.

As the pagan had not attained the knowledge of God, so neither had he effected the redemption of man. Despite subtle systems and brilliant rhetoric, society was going to pieces. Not only had the philosophers failed to discover salvation for the masses, they disclaimed the attempt itself as a hopeless endeavour after an undesirable result; they confined their thought to the happiness of men of culture in the present life. A passage from Lucretius, expressing the philosophy of Epicurus, is thus

[1] Joaquin Miller.

rendered by Mallock in his volume, *Life and Death*. Epicurus addresses his age :—

Come unto me, all ye that labour,
Ye whose souls are heavy laden, come to me,
And I will lead you forth by streams that heal,
And feed you with the truth that sets men free.

On which his Roman disciple, Lucretius, thus comments :—

And would you know his gospel's name, 'tis this—
The healing gospel of the eternal death.

Only a few years later St Paul responded to this dirge with another gospel, the healing gospel of the eternal life which is ours in Christ Jesus. The pretentious philosophy of the Greek proved a moral failure, whilst the boasted orthodoxy of the Jew was practically unavailing. So far as both systems were concerned, civilization was breaking up; but at the sound of the gospel of Christ the moral life of the race revived, and a thrill of power and hope passed through humanity.

3. The last ground we need mention, on which the sanity of St Paul was called in question, was the idea and method of the evangelization for which he suffered the loss of all things. Let the Apostle himself describe the situation. 'For, I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake. . . . Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labour working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things, unto this day.' To endure such sufferings in attempting to carry out a purpose so palpably Utopian at once convicted the Apostle of craziness. That the crucified Carpenter should rebuild the world after a transcendental ideal, and by a programme entrusted to fishermen and slaves, was utterly absurd. If the cause had been sanctioned by royalty, justified by the schools, propagated by the sword, financed by the rich, it would have commanded respect; but to rest the ambitious movement on the foolishness of preaching was the apotheosis of fanaticism.

In the reckoning of men of this world, the evangelism of the Church of Christ is the supreme folly of our day. Christian missions constitute a favourite target for the arrows of profane wit. That gold should be lavished, that so many precious lives should be forfeited in these vain enterprises, calls forth cutting satire and indignant invective. Plaudits are showered upon the hero who falls on the field, the explorer perishing in arctic snow or desert sand, the victim of the aeroplane, or upon any one of the many enthusiasts of knowledge or sport who are supposed to suffer in the interests of the race; but in the eyes of the critic the missionary suffers senselessly and dies as a fool. The cynicism with which many writers treat the sublime spectacle of missionary devotion stands quite apart in its blindness. It is all explained by the fact that the natural man, blind to eternal realities, is convinced of the absolute irrationality of the spiritual life and whatever it may imply.

St Paul refused to be put out of countenance by irony and laughter. He knew that beneath the apparent folly of the gospel was the eternal wisdom, and that we must become fools that we may be wise. Professor Mahaffy, when writing of the national character of the modern Greeks, and referring to the enthusiasm of Lord Byron on their behalf, an enthusiasm which many now think extravagant and misplaced, goes on to remark: 'But here, as elsewhere, the folly of a great genius has more truth in it than the wisdom of his feebler critics.' A thousand times over does history confirm this reflection. The folly of the great thinker, patriot, humanist, has more truth in it than the petty wisdom of a thousand critics. Time has proved this in the case of St Paul —the ages have shown that in his action and doctrine was deeper truth than in all the philosophy of his contemptuous critics.

Amiel shrewdly remarks that 'nothing is more characteristic of a man than the manner in which he behaves towards fools'; and we may note how St Paul's treatment of this class reveals throughout his delicacy and magnanimity. How infinitely removed is the temper of the Apostle from the venomous invec-

tive which he suffered, and by which the faith that he professed has so often been assailed! Christianity is so sure of itself, so certain of victory, that it needs not to grow angry, and it can afford to deal smilingly with its most truculent revilers. And just as the Apostle in his irony displayed a gentle spirit, so he sought only a magnanimous end. Writing concerning fools, a recent writer adds: 'The man of ability who thwarts or browbeats these otherwise estimable individuals will repent it. Rather let him use them as the ants do the aphides, patronizing them, taking their produce, and favouring their growth! a truly Machiavellian advice.' Very far indeed was the Apostolic design from this selfish policy. St Paul never forgets his purpose by all means to save some. It is no pleasure of his to humiliate an erring opponent, but to win him to the heavenly truth and all the blessing it implies.

Word and Power

1 Cor. iv. 20.—'The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.'

The New Testament word for power, *dynamis*—familiar in the English word 'dynamic'—is characteristically Pauline, and we see how the Apostle held this dynamic conception of life in Christ. The power of God! what evidences he had of it. The Kingdom is something he knows about. And it is a Kingdom not of word but of power, not a Kingdom of promise or description, but a Kingdom of experience and victory. So the Corinthians must first understand that what he was directing was not an argument but a revolution. 'I have not come,' he says, 'with persuasive skill, or brilliant exposition, or impressive eloquence.' No man, as we know from his other writings, had a more autocratic command of all the resources of language, but when he comes to the Corinthians he discards wisdom of words. And why? It is because the Corinthians were by nature and training apt to rely too much upon verbal felicity, to think that if only a man could speak well everything was well.

But 'the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.'

Here we may mark three meanings which go successively deeper into the sense of those words.

1. The most obvious meaning of that expression is to condemn words that are simply false or boastful. There were men in Corinth who were full of brave speeches, who talked the Apostle down, who were puffed up with the conceit of knowledge; and the Apostle, with something quite magisterial in his tone, says, 'I will come and find out, not how they talk, but what they can do.' His acceptance of their challenge was, no doubt, thought by some of his opponents almost brutal in its directness. He suspects their words of being simply false words; not lying words spoken with knowledge of their untruth and with intent to deceive, but words spoken without any justification—the words of men elated by their own facilities and energy of expression; words made vigorous without any corresponding vigour of experience.

But the Kingdom of God is real and solid. It points to fact. It does not rely in the smallest degree upon boastful threats or extreme language. We must be very suspicious of a victory which is a victory in the strife of tongues, a triumph of reproach or invective. The word of mere falsehood we may, indeed, put on one side, and with a clear conscience. And yet how many days there are in the Christian life of every man when he has refused to face facts, to ask himself whether he was growing in grace, to watch whether he was overcoming temptation; when he has been satisfied if he could deceive others and deceive a part of himself by an explanation of his high motives! This is a lamentable desertion of the very rudiments of Christian life.

2. The second meaning that belongs to the expression 'not in word, but in power' is a little less direct. The Apostle means that even if his opponents may, in a certain sense, be right in words, he will be content to leave them the victory in debate, if only he may see the gospel and the holy life prospering. Here we find the contented, grave spirit which can endure with patience the triumph of opponents in argument if only God's good work may go on. We ought to consider more carefully how this element of his mind was held in balance with other elements in great contrast with it.

We know how careful he was to persuade. We know how he longed and laboured to make truth clear. That explanatory charity of his, what sacrifices it requires! He will leave no stone of argument unturned in his search for the convincing plea. But still, there are times when he will say, 'If I cannot make my message clear, let me try to make some life safe. Others shall have the applause of the critics if I may have the consolation, or rather if, while I am unconsoled, Christ, my Lord, may only hold fast those He seeks after.'

¶ Eschew controversy, my brethren, as you would eschew the entrance to hell itself. Let them have it their own way. Let them talk. Let them write. Let them correct you. Let them traduce you. Let them judge and condemn you. Let them slay you. Rather let the truth of God itself suffer, than that love suffer. You have not enough of the Divine nature in you to be a controversialist. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not: by whose stripes ye were healed. Heal me, prays Augustine again and again, of this lust of mine of always vindicating myself.[1]

How well content we should be to see the issue of thick volumes of essays on politics and economy to pulverize our case every month, if only we saw the streets where the poor live growing broader, and felt the air that is wanted pouring in; if we might watch the young men growing up strong and brave, with a suitable education, and with a chance of clean conduct and straightforward industry! That is part of the spirit of St Paul. 'Let others have the victory in debate if we may have the souls; for God's Kingdom is not to be made of resolutions carried; it is to be made of souls saved.' England will never be built of improved definitions.

¶ Are there not matters of secular interest in which the movement of the world has often refuted the victors in debate? It is not so many years ago since the theorist cried—'War is impossible.' But the smitten wives and mothers answer, 'You may hold in peace your theory of its impossibility if only you bring back our dead.' Not in word but in power.

There is no greater obstacle to the truth that the Kingdom of God is in power than the doctrine that the Kingdom of God is in word only; that it is a point of view, a method of expression to which one has only to be consistent. That mental position is the commonest of all, in rich and in poor alike.

¶ 'What the gentleman says is very true,' was the remark, now almost classical, of a listener in a South London Mission: 'What the gentleman says is very true, but I don't hold with it.' It was not the *kind* of truth that the speaker wished to acquire. That remark finds a parallel in the unspoken thoughts of many of us. For we are still under the bondage of the notion that the world is an affair of opinion.

3. The Apostle meant to declare that he could not be content even with changing men's opinions. Their victory of argument could not daunt him. Nor, on the other hand, could his own victory of argument satisfy him. It is not sufficient, he teaches, for men's salvation, to change their view of life.

There have always been in the Christian body those who supposed that Christ came only that we might be consoled, as a mourner is consoled by a sympathetic visitor; that He came to persuade us that evil is not evil, in effect. It has been supposed, quite wrongly, that we are saved if we think we are saved; but the faith that justifies is the faith by which we trust Christ, and trust Him to change us. He came to save men really from sin; to render them fit for heaven, not to bring them to a heaven for which they are not fit. If the work of mercy were the work of consoling speech, might not God have well fulfilled His mercy by declaring through an angel's voice the offer of a pardon not joined to sanctifying grace? It need not cost the death of Jesus Christ to save men in that wise. A word would have sufficed. But the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power; not in sentiment, but in action. God sent no trumpet-blast of promise across the world: He sent His only begotten Son. And Christ engraved no golden message in the sky that men might see it and admire and take heart; He yielded Himself to be nailed to the bitter Cross. His

[1] Alexander Whyte.

salvation is holy, actual, costly. It is real in Christ, and it must be real in us. And it can be ours only if our wills are submitted to Him so that our lives may be actually cleansed.

The Law of Infection

1 Cor. v. 6.—'Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?'

The Church at Corinth had a startling membership. This had come about because the Early Church was surrounded by a polluted world. All the vices of the Greek spirit seemed to be running riot in the city in the Apostle's day. Licentiousness went unashamed and unrebuked through society and paraded itself in the streets. To some extent heathen converts carried their ethics into the Christian Church, and even excused their low morality on the ground that the Apostle's teaching was impracticable. A grave scandal existed when Paul wrote his letter to the Corinthian Church. Amongst its members was one whose sin was flagrant and open, yet who was allowed to remain uncondemned. Such a condition of affairs aroused in Paul a feeling of passionate indignation and protest—indignation at the easy tolerance of the Church in the presence of such a sin, protest because of the effect this tolerance was bound to produce, first upon the man himself, and next upon the whole Christian community. So he goes straight to the point and places his finger upon this open sore which had broken out amongst them, and remained unchecked. 'Here is the point of danger,' he says. 'This man must be dealt with, and dealt with instantly. He is suffering from a loathsome, infectious disease. If he cannot be cured then he must be isolated. For sin does not merely concern himself, it concerns *you*. Allow him to remain as he is, and soon the whole Church will be polluted. "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"'

1. *The Dangers of Infection.*—We are all well acquainted with the operations of the 'law of infection' in the physical world. There is nothing the world is so desperately in earnest about to-day as the stamping out of disease. Every other problem—even the social problem—has to give precedence to this. We have learned by many terrible visitations the swiftness with which certain diseases spread, but it is only within recent times that intelligent and scientific effort has been made to control them. Disease, it is now known, has an appalling power of self-propagation, and can be eradicated only by the instant isolation of infected members. This isolation is essential, and, however hard it may appear to the individual himself, is a precautionary measure universally justified. Knowing, then, as we do, the dangers to the community through infection, it is our duty as intelligent citizens to support the efforts being made to suppress these dangers.

When we turn from the physical to the moral and spiritual realm, we find the law of infection working with equal activity. There are mental diseases, just as there are physical diseases, some of them infectious, others not; and there are moral and spiritual diseases of which this is equally true. Statistics go to prove, for instance, that those who mix with the insane are the most liable to insanity, and the persons who consort with the vicious cannot remain pure. In its way Society deals with each of these three forms of disease in its hospitals, asylums, and gaols. Each of these means isolation for two purposes: first, for the saving of the individual attacked by disease; second, for the safeguarding of Society from the effects of infection.

The fact, however, which more immediately concerns us, because it is by far the most serious, is the infectious nature of sin.

We are so organically united that to come into contact with an evil influence means that we are in grave danger of being smitten by it. This danger meets us from two directions. Medical science distinguishes between infectious and contagious diseases. Contagion is the communication of a disease by contact with the person labouring under it. Infection is used to denote the transmission of the disease, say, through breathing bad air. The one may be termed the transmission of disease through personal contact, the other through poisonous atmosphere. This distinction of medical science is capable of equally forcible application in the moral and spiritual realm.

First there is the contagion which comes through personal contact with evil companions.

If any of us consort with avowedly frivolous, or immoral people, we cannot expect to remain unbesmirched. We leave their presence morally and spiritually weakened, it may be carrying away a poisonous germ which will devastate our lives.

The second way by which disease may be transmitted is infection. Infection comes through frequenting places where the atmosphere is morally poisonous. For purposes of health, as they concern both the body and the soul, we have to determine with whom we shall consort, and the places we shall visit. And the man who places spiritual health on a lower plane than the health of the body possesses that vitiated outlook on life which is the hardest of all things to combat.

Realizing how constant is the danger of infection, let us consider some suggestions as to the best means of defending ourselves against it.

2. *Rules of Spiritual Health.*—According to medical science the supreme safeguard against disease is the keeping of oneself in robust health. As a matter of fact, while there are such things as infected areas, no disease can be held within them, and even the greatest care will not safeguard anyone. Germs are all around us, and our safety does not lie in fumigations, but in health. It is possible for us, however, to sink into such a poor physical condition that we become the easy victim of the first poisonous germ that comes our way. This is exactly true of the children of God. While there are certain places so impregnated with disease that it would be a shame and a scandal for any Christian to be found there, sin cannot be so easily located, and no life is immune from its germs. Though we may not desire it, our duty may lead us into contact with evil men and into the midst of evil surroundings. Our only security, therefore, is in keeping our souls in health. When Paul said, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me,' he spoke in terms of perfect health. Our unerring duty is to preserve within us the life of Christ. It is to keep in constant personal contact with the Lord and Giver of Life.

The second rule of health is that if evil passions attack us we must learn to starve them. We are to annihilate them by refusing to them their proper nourishment. 'Make no provison for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof,' the Apostle advises us. When evil thoughts enter the mind we can starve them by refusing to dwell upon them. Only, if this is to be done successfully it must be done at once. There is no use in beginning to starve evil passions when they have become our tyrants, it is unlikely that we shall succeed. It is when they are still weak, when first they present themselves, before they become the fixed tenants of our minds, or fasten themselves around our hearts, that by paying no heed to them, making no provision for them, we starve them out.

> Yield but thy thought to sin,
> And, ere a deed begin,
> Evil shall find thy clime a homely breath:
> The things that hide from God
> Shall bask where thou hast trod,
> And all thy life be rank to nourish death.

There are some to whom this advice—Keep in health—Starve sin out—is vain, because they are already stricken to the soul with disease. They say, 'Your advice comes to us too late. Our health is gone. Secret sins possess us. Our imaginations are haunted by evil forms, our hearts are inflamed by restless passions and unappeasable cravings. We are helpless, and enslaved, and diseased.'

These are terrible admissions, but if there is sickness in the world there is also healing. 'They that are whole need not a physician,' said Christ, 'but they that are sick,' and in these words He unfolded His gracious ministry. And the splendidly true thing about Him is this, that there is no disease of the soul with which we may be stricken which He cannot heal. In the realm of health-giving all power is given unto Him. Sometimes doctors have to send men and women away pale and trembling, with the sentence of death upon them, unable by any skill possessed by them to arrest the fatal ravages of their disease. But no one need leave Christ's consulting-room 'pale and trembling.' He is the Great Physician, and we need only come to Him to find salvation.

¶ John Collier has a picture which brings this home to us with a pitiful realism. Within a consulting-room a doctor sits at his desk, and beside him is a young man, to the unpractised eye in the prime of health. But the

doctor has just examined him, and is now telling him in grave tones that he has but a short time to live, that for his malady science knows no cure. There he sits in his chair, this youth, faultlessly dressed, so young, so full of promise, with life just opening up to him, and over the picture the artist has inscribed those terrible words: 'Sentenced to Death!' The words come to us with a stab. Dr Horton says of the picture: 'As I looked into the young man's face how I longed, though only a picture, to tell him that if he believed in Jesus he had everlasting life—that he need not be afraid, he need not be cast down. . . . As I looked into the picture I so longed to tell him, that I turned my face away.'

What actually does 'coming to Christ' mean? When we use the words we mean much the same thing as when we advise those stricken with physical disease to go to a physician whom we can trust.

(1) First of all we must go *with an intense longing to be cleansed.* This is what 'conviction of sin' means. It does not mean a condition of terror, though many reach that condition; it is sufficient if a man, realizing the hideous nature of his sin, earnestly longs to be saved from it. Too little room has been made, especially by some forms of evangelicalism, for men who are moved more by conviction than by emotion. But no man, however he be constituted, need come to Christ who has not convinced himself that his sin is a terrible thing, and who does not long with all his heart to have done with it.

(2) In the next place we must come to Christ *trusting in His power to cure.* No man goes to a physician at all unless with this disposition; it would be the height of folly for anyone to go for a cure to one who he believed couldn't cure. There are physical and nervous disorders, also, which can be cured only through the co-operation of our own wills. And this is true of sin. The cure of it can be effected only by the co-operation of our wills, and the exercise of our trust; without this the whole thing would be unintelligent, it would be entirely without intrinsic value.

(3) Along with this there must be *submission.* We must 'do the will' of the Physician, we must obey His commands, we must submit ourselves to His direction; without this submission it is useless either to go to the Physician or to expect a cure. When this is done, then He saves. He lifts us into contact with Himself, He makes us one with Him. Then that boundless Life which is in Him enters through our communion with Him into us, and we are created anew. Contact with Him infects us, waves of spiritual life and power flowing from Him enter into us and make us one with Him. 'Because I *live*,' said Christ, 'ye shall *live also*.'

Preparation

1 Cor. v. 7.—'Purge out therefore the old leaven.'

The Passover meal had an interesting ceremony as part of its due preparation. The head of the household was bidden to search out and cleanse his house from leaven, with a lighted candle in his hand. When he began he prayed: 'Blessed be thou, Jehovah, our God, King of the Universe, who hast sanctified us to keep Thy commandments, and hast commanded us to remove the leaven.' When the search was over he prayed: 'All the leaven that is in my possession, that which I have seen and that which I have not seen, be it null, be it accounted as the dust of the earth.'[1] This removal of leaven was symbolic of the haste with which Israel had escaped from the tyranny of Pharaoh. But there was another reason. Leaven, being due to fermentation—that is, corruption, putrefaction—was regarded as a symbol of evil, just as salt was regarded as a symbol of purity and wholesomeness. It was this aspect of it that Christ used when He warned His disciples against 'the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees,' and that St Paul used when he spoke of 'the leaven of malice and wickedness.' The unleavened soul is a soul free from all polluting, corrupting forms of evil, a soul filled 'with sincerity and truth,' pure, healthy, holy.

Before partaking of the Lord's Supper, says St Paul, let a man 'purge out the old leaven.' Let him go carefully through the rooms of his heart to see that no unhallowing leaven still hides there; let him cast himself into the assaying fires of self-criticism, self-scrutiny, to see if his faith, his thoughts, his life are without alloy and according to the stern rule of 'sincerity and truth.'

[1] A. Edersheim, *The Temple*, 188.

1. Every one knows the task is as difficult as it is urgent. Human nature has few more wonderful faculties than those of self-deception, self-delusion, self-excuse. Yet there lies within us all the power to get outside ourselves and sift the inner world of motives and inclinations, and watch ourselves in action. Tennyson's lines are familiar where he points out that every man carries

> A silent court of justice in his breast,
> Himself the judge and jury, and himself
> The prisoner at the bar.[1]

¶ This self-examination was always characteristic of the saints. To delve into the rich mines of spiritual autobiography is to be brought into touch with men who were fearless explorers of the heart and intrepid dwellers in its darkest caverns. St Augustine, Bunyan, Baxter, Halyburton, Fraser of Brea—all these are remorseless unveilers and dissectors of man's inmost soul. Of the Laird of Brea, Dr Alexander Whyte well says that in his Memoirs—that 'book of the intricacies of his heart and life'—he investigates the labyrinth of the heart with a depth and a grip unparalleled in spiritual literature. In season and out of season, this devout, acute, and most subtle soul examined himself with unrivalled tenacity and perspicuity. He brought 'one of the best of intellects of that intellectual day' to the task of self-knowledge, and he will live in his Memoirs 'as long as a scholarly religion and an evangelical religion and a spiritual religion and a profoundly experimental religion lives in his native land.'[2]

2. If self-inspection leads to self-rectification it is wholly good; but it has its peril, for it may become a form of self-tormenting, a sorry result indeed. There is much to be said for the accusation sometimes made that self-examination tends to an unhealthy nervousness and an irritable morbidity of soul. The invalid for ever taking his temperature and feeling his pulse may increase his disease. 'Sin,' said Matthew Arnold, 'is not a monster to be mused on, but an impotence to be got rid of. All thinking about it, beyond what is necessary to get rid of it, is waste of energy and waste of time.' Walt Whitman, in a well-known passage, said he preferred to be like the cattle, for they did not make him sick by lying awake in the dark and weeping over their sins. His fellow-countryman, Professor William James, has rightly labelled this as 'swagger.'[1] But there is an element of truth in these words; they are at least true to the New Testament, for it has no penitential psalms. Penitence and sorrow for having sinned against God's love and mercy there are; but the New Testament Christians did not sit down and worry about their sins, they overcame them. Rightly they thought more of the remedy supplied by the great Physician than of the disease. The higher man of to-day who is not worrying about his sins will never become the highest till he so worries that they are for ever put away from him. If our self-examination leads us to penitence and confession it must also lead right onward through these to amendment, and thence to holiness and peace.

¶ 'The soul,' says St Francis, 'which is wholly bent on pleasing its divine Lover has neither desire nor leisure to fall back upon itself. It presses on continually (or should do so) along the one straight path which has that love for its aim, not allowing itself to waste its powers in continual self-inspection for the purpose of seeing what it is doing or if it is satisfied.'

St Anthony was once asked how we might know if we prayed properly. 'By not knowing it at all,' he answered. He certainly prays well who is so taken up with God that he does not know he is praying. The traveller who is always counting his steps will not make much headway.[2]

Whatever perils lie in self-examination, the urgency of the need lies in the awful power of self-deception.

> Below the surface-stream, shallow and light,
> Of what we *say* we feel—below the stream,
> As light, of what we *think* we feel—there flows
> With noiseless current strong, obscure and deep,
> The central stream of what we feel indeed.[3]

3. With what candle are we to search the dark corners of our heart to purge out the old leaven? Surely it must be the candle of the

[1] *Sea Dreams.*
[2] E. Herman, *The Touch of God*, 17.

[1] *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 86.
[2] *The Spirit of St Francis de Sales.*
[3] Matthew Arnold, *St Paul and Protestantism*, 56.

Lord, not the rushlight of our neighbour's conduct. There is no place where the light of the Lord shines upon us more steadily, more searchingly, than at His table. Pascal once said that we could measure the depth of our misery and sin by the greatness of our redemption through the Incarnation.[1] The tremendous remedy which our sins necessitated reveals the blackness of our iniquity. 'I don't know that our sins ever look so ghastly,' writes Mr Gossip, 'as they do at Christ's table.' The light at the table blackens every blot. But the Eternal Light is the Eternal Love. It wins whilst it winnows; it heals whilst it probes the wounds. And we need such a strong, high light, for self-satisfaction is so easy and treachery to our highest interests so fatal.

Men are lulled to sleep by pride, and soothed into self-ignorance by their virtues. The Pharisaic leaven all too quickly and silently steals into our breast, and we pride ourselves upon our virtues till the flashing light of God's love for us in Christ reveals the dark spots and rents in our life. Before the Pilgrim was allowed to sit down to Supper in the Palace Beautiful he was closely questioned by three fair maidens, Piety, Prudence, and Charity—and these three ever stand to 'fence' the table. The Supper appeals to our conscience; it commands us to know ourselves at our worst. Modern Christendom has agreed, since John Stuart Mill first phrased the matter, that the standard of Christian conduct is so to act that Jesus Christ Himself would approve our life. Christ has thus become a kind of Objective Conscience, a Test for human conduct. We sing with Whittier, often with unthinking glibness:

> We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
> We test our lives by Thine.

But who dares to do it with regularity? Is it not that Example, that Presence, which abashes us, convinces us of our sin, condemns us without a word, whilst our excuses falter on our lips?

¶ Recently a certain church installed a system by which its exterior was flood-lighted at night until it stands out almost as brightly as in the sunlight. No one can come into the circle of that white light without being pricked out into the clearest prominence. So no one can come into the circle of Christ's character without realizing what it would be to live without sin; so white is that standard that every stain appears. Never thereafter can we be without a consciousness of what personal life and social character could be, if it were only Christlike. Just as Raphael and Titian and Angelo have set the standard for artists, just as Handel, Mozart and Beethoven have set the standard for musicians, so Christ has set the standard of character for the world.[1]

Yet if our cry is, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,' our next cry has to be, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.' For it is still true He did not come to judge, it was to save He came. 'Self-examination,' wrote Dr Dale, 'is a very necessary thing now and then, but I think that when we are at the Lord's Supper we should think more of Christ than of ourselves.' We lift our hearts to Him, weary, unsatisfactory, sin-marred as they may be, when reviewed in the light of His Example; but from Him comes only the word of pardon and the comforting promise of more strength to meet the coming day in which He bids us play the hero. He creates the appetite for righteousness and goodness and holiness, and He is prepared to satisfy it. He awakens the consciousness of sin that He may prove Himself a Saviour.

¶ 'Let us then,' so runs the exhortation in John Knox's Book of Common Prayer, 'consider this sacrament is a singular medicine for all poor sick creatures; a comfortable help to weak and fainting souls; and that our good Lord, who breaketh not the bruised reed, neither quencheth the smoking flax, requires no other worthiness nor fitness in us but that we unfeignedly acknowledge our sinfulness, and emptiness, and imperfection, and look to Him for the supply of all we need.'[2]

[1] *Thoughts*, IX., viii.

The Blood of Christ

1 Cor. v. 7.—'Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.'

The words 'Christ our passover' view the death of Christ as a meeting-point between the Old Testament and the New, and vividly

[1] L. H. Bugbee, *Christ To-Day*, 61.
[2] E. J. Ives, *The Pledges of His Love*, 33.

bring before us the Jewish character of the primitive Christian Church. We are reminded that the Apostles themselves and their first converts were all Jews, and that for a good many years after the Crucifixion it was a doubtful point whether Gentiles could become Christians at all without first becoming Jews. It was natural, therefore, that the death of Christ should be closely associated in the early Church with the Jewish institution of sacrifice. Daily in the Temple at Jerusalem living creatures were put to death as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. Yearly at the Passover every Jewish household sacrificed a lamb without blemish and without spot. Christ thus came to be regarded by the early Jewish Christians as the antitype of the Paschal Lamb, and even Gentile converts were taught the meaning of this Jewish ritual. St Paul evidently felt no doubt that his reference to the Passover in the text would be understood by the Gentile members of the Corinthian Church. Our Passover, he tells them, our Christian Passover, was sacrificed in the person of Christ. That conception of the death of Christ as representing the Paschal sacrifice has remained an unbroken tradition in the Church down to the present day. Our services bring it before us every Eastertide, and make it a part of our Easter associations.

We live at a time when sacrifice in the old literal Jewish sense has long since ceased to have any place in our religious worship. But the sacrificial aspect of the death of Christ is a subject which can never lose its importance in Christian theology. As we read the Epistles, and especially the Epistle to the Hebrews, we come upon phrase after phrase which forces it upon our attention. Take, for instance, the various passages which mention the blood of Christ. We are made nigh by the blood of Christ. We have redemption through His blood. The blood of Christ who offered Himself without spot to God will purge our consciences from dead works. We are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

What do phrases like these mean to Christians at the present day? Have they become meaningless to us? Ought we to give them up? We certainly could not agree to do that. No Christian would be content lightly to part with them. They are charged with too deep and sacred associations. But we must admit that they have little religious value for us unless we can give them a definite spiritual meaning. Many of us, for instance, feel a difficulty nowadays about certain expressions used in some of the hymns on the Passion. They seem to us to treat the physical aspects of the death of our Blessed Lord in too literal and materialistic a manner. Take, for example, the hymn:

> Come let us stand beneath the Cross;
> So may the blood from out His side
> Fall gently on us, drop by drop.
> Jesus, our Lord, is crucified.

It is possible, no doubt, to take these words in a strictly symbolical and spiritual sense. The thought of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross may be viewed as a gracious influence which sinks gently and gradually into our hearts. But the metaphor is certainly a violent one, and the words would not be likely to have much spiritual meaning for the ordinary worshipper. How different, how deeply spiritual, is the delicate reticence with which another hymn handles the same theme:

> See from His head, His hands, His feet
> Sorrow and love flow mingling down:
> Did e'er such love and sorrow meet?

1. What, then, is the inner spiritual meaning of the sacrifice involved in the death of Jesus Christ? It is obvious that the actual literal shedding of Christ's blood is not the really important point. The shedding of His blood was a mere accident due to the mode of public execution customary at that time. His death might conceivably have taken place in such a way that not a single drop of His blood was spilt, and yet the reality and the efficacy of the sacrifice which He offered, 'Himself the Victim and Himself the Priest,' might still be exactly what it is now. To suppose otherwise is to suppose the existence of some mysterious, magical power in the substance of His blood, such as the Neapolitans attribute to the blood of St Januarius. On the other hand, it would have made a great difference in the sacrificial aspect if Christ had met His death naturally, by accident or disease. Two things were

necessary to give a redemptive character to His death: on the one hand, He had to suffer at the hands of wicked men; in other words, an act of violence was necessary: and, on the other hand, there was a still more indispensable condition, namely, His own willingness to die; in other words, His life had to be laid down by Himself and not merely taken from Him by His murderers. The efficacy of the atoning sacrifice lay not in the effusion of blood, not in the death itself, but in the moral conditions under which the death took place. We must interpret the blood of Christ in some spiritual sense which satisfies our moral requirements, if we are rightly to appreciate the sacrificial aspect of the Crucifixion.

2. What was symbolized in the old Jewish sacrifices by the shedding of the victim's blood? That has often been misunderstood. It has been supposed that these sacrifices meant that God exacted bloodshed as a condition of the expiation of guilt. The real meaning of these sacrifices had in time become lost, but originally, it seems certain, they were not based on the idea that God was exacting the penalty of death from an innocent victim. The blood of the victim had an altogether different meaning: it symbolized not death, but life. The blood was shed with the object of detaching and releasing the life, setting it free, so to speak, from the gross material conditions of the body, and in this state presenting it as an offering to God. The idea was not primarily that of exacting a death-penalty from an innocent victim. Incidentally the creature had to die, but only in order that its life might be offered to God as a symbol of the inner sacrifice of willing obedience which was the offerer's own spiritual oblation. The outward and visible sign was the blood, but the inward and spiritual grace, so to speak, was the life which it symbolized, the life liberated from material conditions, the spiritualized life of an obedient heart.

3. Let us apply this thought by way of illustration to human acts of self-sacrifice. What is it that can be most truly called our life? It is that which most truly constitutes our personality; that is to say, our will. Our will is our dearest possession, the thing we cling to most and give up last. Our will is our own in a sense in which nothing else is our own: it is the one precious thing which we can really sacrifice to God. In considering, then, any human act of self-sacrifice, we might say that the shedding of the blood under the Jewish sacrificial system was represented by the surrender of the man's will to God in loving oblation. But our acts of self-surrender vary, of course, in their moral and spiritual importance. Some have a higher and some a lower value, and in estimating the difference between them we sometimes use a phrase which reminds us of the symbolism of the Jewish sacrifice. We may make sacrifices, and costly ones too, which do not draw blood from us. They do not go to the very centre of our life: they do not touch the nerve or strain the heart. But there are other sacrifices of which it may be said that they cost a man his life-blood.

¶ I had a friend, a sweet and saintly man, whose little girl was dying. She was an only child, much loved, and his heart was very bitter and rebellious. Then he turned to his wife and said: 'Wife, we must not let God *take* our child. *We must give her.*' So kneeling down beside the bed together, they gave up their baby—and their wills.[1]

4. May we not apply this thought in an infinitely higher degree to Christ's sacrifice of Himself upon the Cross? Do we not here find a really spiritual and illuminating interpretation of that phrase which when used literally has so little real religious value for us, 'the atoning blood of Jesus Christ'? The work of redemption drew blood from Christ in a spiritual sense. If we may say so reverently, it drained His whole personality. How much His whole-hearted surrender of His own will to the will of His Heavenly Father cost Him we have no means of knowing, but we have some evidence of what it meant in the description of the scene at Gethsemane. We see there that the effort to redeem mankind was taxing Christ to the uttermost. The constant surrender of the whole self culminated in a sublime act of loving self-sacrifice, which was inspired by the highest conceivable moral aim, and sustained by the most spiritual and intimate sense of Divine communion. God indeed spared not His own Son, that so by our sight of Him upon the Cross, by our realization of that last tremendous effort of a life that had been all along

[1] G. H. Morrison, *Highways of the Heart*, 125.

one of tremendous strain, we might come to know the depths of His Divine love, and feel that He by being lifted up was drawing us to Himself.

Because Thy Love hath sought me,
All mine is Thine and Thine is mine:
Because Thy Blood hath bought me,
I will not be mine own but Thine.

I lift my heart to Thy Heart,
Thy Heart sole resting-place for mine:
Shall Thy Heart crave for my heart,
And shall not mine crave back for Thine? [1]

Softness

1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.—'The effeminate . . . shall not inherit the kingdom of God.'

THERE may be in this word which our English Authorized Version translates 'effeminate' a hint of those deeper and darker vices that stained the ancient Greek civilization. There are some sins of which it is a shame even to speak, but those unspeakably shameful sins were freely practised in ancient Greece; and it is possible that Paul has those nameless sins in his mind here. But the word literally means 'soft,' just that and nothing more, and it may be that Paul refers here to the people given to soft, easy, and luxurious living, the people who refuse to endure hardship and decline to bear a cross. Of these people the Apostle says this terrible thing, 'The soft shall not inherit the kingdom of God.'

The Kingdom of God represents here the great prize of living. It is a very wealthy term, and no single definition can adequately describe its contents. Sometimes it stands for a rule of God to be established here and now. Sometimes it refers to that eternal world in which God's rule is absolute. Here it quite obviously has that eternal connotation. Practically we may say that it is equivalent to heaven. The condition of entrance into heaven is faith in Jesus Christ. But faith in Christ involves a certain mode of life. The Christian belief carries with it always a certain ethic.

Now that is just where the Corinthian Christians went wrong. They professed to believe in Christ, but the morals they practised were pagan. Their Christian faith had not issued in the Christian ethic. So in this chapter, and especially in the verses round about the text, Paul uses great plainness of speech with them. He sets down a catalogue of about ten sets of vicious people, and flatly and plainly tells them that such people effectually close the Kingdom of God against themselves. We can understand why fornicators and idolaters and adulterers and drunkards and revilers should fail to inherit the Kingdom of God. These sins are flagrant, they are heinous, they are monstrous. But in the middle of this appalling list comes the effeminate, the soft; and the occurrence of that word brings us up with a sort of jerk.

So far as Corinth was concerned the Apostle Paul was far more afraid of softness than of those other more flagrant sins with which it is classed. No one can read the letters through, the first letter especially, without seeing that softness—a kind of limp and easy tolerance—was Corinth's besetting sin. Here were Christians who tolerated drunkenness at the supper of the Lord. Here were Christians who tolerated in their Church a man who was openly guilty of incest. They allowed the life of the Church to be corrupted, all because they were too soft to take the difficult right way and do the difficult right thing. And Paul tells these people, loving ease more than right, excusing sin instead of fighting it, 'The soft shall not inherit the kingdom of God.'

Let us consider the truth of this word in relation to the Individual, the Nation, and the Church.

1. *The Individual.*—All the calls of the gospel are calls to hardship, to sacrifice, to battle. That was the call that Christ continually issued. 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.' Our Lord would have no man follow Him under the mistaken impression that he was going to have an easy time. He made it abundantly clear that He was calling men not to comfort, but to a campaign. 'He that hath no sword,' He said, 'let him sell his cloak and buy one.' The cloak is the garb of peace and of slippered ease, and it is therefore no garment for any one in Christ's service, for Christ's service does not mean peace, it means war.

[1] Christina Rossetti.

¶ 'To Browning,' says Professor Jones, 'morality always presents itself under the guise of warfare. It is not a mere equilibrium of qualities—the measured, self-contained, statuesque ethics of the Greeks, nor the asceticism and self-restraint of puritanism, nor the peaceful evolution of Goethe's artistic morality: it is *valour in the battle of life*. He bids each man let out all the power that is within him, and throw himself upon life with all the energy of his being. Man advances morally by fighting his way inch by inch, and he gains nothing except through conflict.' [1]

St Paul's description of the Christian life as he found it in his own experience answers in every respect to what is suggested in these calls of Christ. Life was for him 'in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings.' These are the figures he uses to describe it: it is a wrestle, not against flesh and blood—that would have been a comparatively simple business; it is a wrestle against the principalities and the powers. It is a race, an athleticism, a gymnastic. 'Gymnasticize thyself unto godliness.' This is how his appeal to Timothy ran: 'Come and take your share of hardship with me as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.'

The Christian call runs no differently in this twentieth century than it did in the first. It is still a call to self-denial and to cross-bearing. It needs courage and resolution to live pure, speak true, and follow Christ the King. There is no greatness even in this world without struggle. People do not slip or slide into greatness; and they do not slip or slide into goodness either.

¶ With weakness accepted and offered as an excuse for failure, Stevenson had little sympathy. 'Those who go to the devil in youth, with anything like a fair chance, were probably little worth saving from the first; they must have been feeble fellows—creatures made of putty and packthread, without steel or fire, anger or true joyfulness, in their composition; we may sympathize with their parents, but there is not much cause to go into mourning for themselves; for, to be quite honest, the weak brother is the worst of mankind.' [2]

¶ Mr Pliable in that inimitable *Pilgrim's Progress* thought he would like to accompany Christian on his journey to the Celestial City, but they came very quickly to the Slough of Despond. Christian somehow or other struggled through, but Mr Pliable, the man without a spine, without backbone, the soft Mr Pliable, got out of the Slough of Despond on the side nearest his own house. He gave up the City Celestial, and drifted back to the City of Destruction.

And not only do we need this strength of character, but we need a certain decision and definiteness of thought as well. There is a softness and pliability of mind which is as perilous as softness of character. The Christian life is not possible to the man who has not certain clear and strong and definite moral convictions. If it is real greatness we are after, if it is Christian character we are after, there must be some things upon which our mind is not soft and impressionable, but hard as adamant. It must be set hard upon certain great and simple and fundamental things like these: that sin is sin always and everywhere and that nothing excuses it; that God is God; that right is right, and wrong is wrong, always and everywhere; that because God is God, the wages of sin is death always and everywhere.

2. *The Nation.*—The nation that loves ease and luxurious living has no mighty future in store for it. 'Live dangerously' is an invariable condition of empire. The soft nations, the nations that have to endure no rigours of climate and have no sort of fight for existence, are never ruling and governing peoples, never! The history of fallen nations and empires demonstrates this truth, that when luxury sets in and softness saps and disintegrates character a nation inevitably falls victim to people of simpler manners and sturdier life. Perhaps we in Britain were in danger of becoming soft in pre-war days, and perhaps all the agonies and sufferings we have endured were God's means of averting from us the doom of softness. A soft England would have been a decadent and doomed England, but possibly a Britain that has been compelled to endure hardness and to live dangerously may yet, by the grace of God, keep her place among the nations of the world.

3. *The Church.*—Hugh Price Hughes used to

[1] J. Burns.
[2] J. Kelman, *The Faith of Robert Louis Stevenson*, 213.

say that the business of the Church is not primarily to coddle the saints. The business of the Church is to win people for Jesus Christ. It is a sort of fighting force that the Lord has. There was nothing soft about the early Church. It did not seek to live on comfortable terms with the world; it challenged it, and spoke boldly to it about sin and judgment. The result was that the Church had a hard time. It was a Church in the furnace and under the Cross, but it was a mighty Church, and it inherited the Kingdom.

Later on in its history the Church made terms with the empire. Wealth came to it, high place came to it, worldly honour came to it. Life became easy. But with the increase of prosperity and worldly ease there went a steady loss of power. The Church of the fifth and sixth centuries is not to be mentioned in the same breath with the Church of the first century. Instead of conquering the world, the world conquered it.

¶ There is a story of a certain Pope who was watching the bags of Peter's pence being brought into the Vatican treasury. Turning to a friend he said with a smile, 'St Peter is no longer able to say, "Silver and gold have I none."' 'No, indeed, Sire!' replied his friend, 'but neither is he able any longer to say, "Arise and walk!"'

The Church is passing through a great testing time to-day. We are between two worlds, the one dead, the other waiting to be born, and what men will think of the Church of Christ depends very much upon how it acts to-day. The call we are faced with is this: whether we Christian folk are willing to go without the camp bearing Christ's reproach. What we have to do is to build the entire social order upon the lines and principles which our Lord has laid down in His Holy Word. The Church that is willing to do this and take the risks involved in it will do much to establish Christ's rule upon the earth. But the soft Church shall never inherit the Kingdom of God.

And this is true not only of the Church that is soft in fibre of character, but of the Church that is intellectually limp and soft, so tolerant and so broad that it really seems to have no definite and authentic creed left. And who will say that is not our peril in these days?

¶ Modern saints go from the sanctuary into the world of fashionable life, and from the communion table to the tables of earthly pleasure. Your modern Christian does not believe in being 'peculiar'; he does not like a narrow, exclusive religion; he does not want to appear bigoted. He wants to be a liberal, large-minded man. He would commend the religion of Christ by proving that it is not stern and ascetic. The result is that thousands of Church members live so that one cannot tell where the Church ends and the world begins.[1]

Religion with many has become a pietism, a kindly emotion, and not a great faith of the soul. We have impressions but not convictions, sensibilities but not mighty experiences. 'This is the victory,' said St John, 'that overcometh the world, even our faith.' But the Church that has no mighty faith, no deep, strong faith, is going to make no impression upon the outside world.

¶ Professor Peabody has published two or three volumes of addresses which he gave to the Harvard students, and in one of them he speaks about the religion of the Puritans. He says that the religion of the Puritans used to be known as the 'Hard Church.' Well, perhaps Puritanism was a 'Hard Church,' and perhaps it is à good thing that we have been delivered from its narrowness and its literalism and its intolerance. But as Professor Peabody goes on to say, 'Is it not time to face the perils of the soft Church? It is not promoting free thought, but free thoughtlessness; it stands not for liberty, but for license. It is often very broad, but it is always very thin.'[2]

The Holy Spirit

1 Cor. vi. 11.—'Ye were sanctified . . . in the spirit of our God' (R.V.).

THERE are three supreme unveilings of God recorded in the Scriptures. He manifested Himself in creation; and then His commandment was, Let there be Light. He manifested Himself again in the incarnation and mission and redemption of Christ; and then the fiat was, Let there be Love. He manifested Himself a third time in the wind and fire of Pentecost; and now His decree ran, Let there be Life. The Holy Spirit had His essential

[1] J. R. Miller, *The Touch of Christ*, 76.
[2] J. D. Jones, in *The Record of Christian Work*, xli. 541.

share in each of the unveilings, and it was He who charged Himself with the fulfilment of each of the imperatives. He brooded over the face of the waters in the far-off birth of things, bringing order from confusion and light from darkness. He prepared a human body for the Lord Christ, and upheld Him till His work was finished. He bestowed Himself on believing souls in a fullness unknown before, when the Day of Pentecost was come.

Let there be Light; Let there be Love; Let there be Life—when God the Spirit gives effect to the three words, not only on the wide scale of the physical universe, and not only in the vast field of the Christian Church, but in the little world of our individual being, we understand what Sanctification is for ourselves.

¶ When she was twenty-two years of age Catherine Marsh passed through a spiritual experience that left its mark on her after life. Although she had written and spoken of the Holy Spirit's work, she had not realized, until she read a small volume of sermons on the subject by the Rev. J. Harrington Evans, what is revealed in the Scriptures concerning His personality—that He can comfort, teach, bring to remembrance, command or forbid, can love and can be grieved. Then she determined that she would not cease to pray that He, the Spirit of Truth, would reveal Himself to her mind and heart. Her fervent prayer was soon answered; and afterwards she wrote to Miss Maitland: 'Oh, Cary, I have learnt so to love and trust in "the Holy Ghost the Comforter." He was only an Influence to me once, now I *know* He is equal to the Father, and to the Son, in the reality of His *Share* in the Godhead, *and all it is to me*.'[1]

1. *The Spirit is Teacher.*—He illuminates. He is the Spirit of Truth, who leads into all truth, and bears witness of Christ, and brings to remembrance what Christ has said and to recognition what He desires to say. 'Let there be Light,' is the command He rings in our ears, and He gives what He commands; for, with His advent and His inhabitation, the day breaks and it is glad, confident morning.

Let us consider what a new and radiant Bible we have when the Spirit opens and unfolds it. We would not deny that He may have His messages for our souls apart from the written Word, a secret of the Lord which He whispers immediately to them who fear and love Him. If so, the inner light must harmonize with the light which flows from the Holy Book. A new and radiant Bible it is, beyond question, when the Spirit is the Interpreter. He effects a double change. There is a change on chapter and verse. Formerly they were scarcely more authoritative than the speculations and theorizings of ordinary literature and learning; now they are the 'Verily, Verily' of our God and His Christ. They tell us realities, and the most vital and serious and joyful realities in existence. They lead us straight to those things in comparison with which other things are as the small dust of the balance: sin and salvation, life and peace, our soul in its bankruptcy and our Lord in His supply. They come stamped with God's seal, an unassailable revelation which He has sent to ourselves.

That is the one change; but there is another, coincident with it. There is a change in the reader as well as in the chapter and verse. The Spirit, having transformed the Book into the very vision and voice of God, transforms us so that we are in tune with the Book. One must have the philosophic temper in order to appreciate philosophy. One must be susceptible to the magic of poetry, or the most haunting songs that ever have been sung will be a tale of little meaning. Till the Spirit assumes the control, we have lost our spiritual tastes. They are atrophied, asleep, as good as dead. But He awakes them. He nourishes and fosters them. He gives us the hearing ear, and the seeing eye, and the approving conscience, and the responsive will. Discernment, sensitiveness, obedience are the results of the residence of the Holy Ghost in us.

The Spirit uses the Word to show us what is lacking still in our character as children of God; and we are not satisfied till the want is met and the deficiency is filled up. 'The Lord's words,' said Brother Mao, the Chinese saint, 'are not simply words.' No, they are the King's ambassadors and our guides. They are prophets and angels of the Most High. They breathe on us with warm breath. They lay on us their restraining or constraining hands. The Holy Spirit is in them and in us who read them. And thus He sanctifies.

[1] L. E. O'Rorke, *The Life and Friendships of Catherine Marsh*, 36.

2. *The Spirit is Comforter.*—He surrounds us with the atmosphere of affection and strengthening. He speaks to our hearts, and His word is, 'Let there be Love.' That was the second of God's great imperatives to our poor world which had lost its way. To utter it He had to journey from the marvel of the creation to the profounder marvel of the incarnation; and Christ was born in Bethlehem, to die on Calvary, and to rise again the third day. We know love in its essence, at its white heat, only when we know Christ. So it was on the big canvas, and so it is on the small. The Holy Ghost sets each one of us, believing men and women, in the air and climate of love—how? By making the Lord Jesus Christ our All in all. By showing us that there is not a conceivable need of ours which He does not anticipate, which He does not face, and which He does not dispel.

We are guilty, but the Spirit commends the Christ of the humiliation, and bids us reflect that His sacrifice and His righteousness are available and are enough to save the chief of sinners. We are girdled round by forces irreconcilably antagonistic to our truest life, and there are dispositions and propensities within our renewed souls which are inclined to come to terms with these wicked forces; but the Spirit points us to the Christ of the exaltation, the Priest who is ever interceding for us, and the King who has all dominion in heaven and on earth. We are burdened about the maintenance and growth of that good thing which has been planted in the soil of our being; but the Spirit reminds us that He who planted the seed is Himself present in our being's centre to bring the seed to ripeness and harvest—He makes the indwelling Christ the guarantee and guardian of our progress on and up.

We are accustomed to talk of the inward witness of the Spirit, the assurance He breeds in Christians that they are beyond doubt the children and the heirs of God. It is a witness short of which none of us should stop, but the Spirit produces it, not by turning our gaze in anxious introspection to our moods and states and feelings, but by fastening our gaze in simple contentment on our sufficient Lord. When we obey the injunction; when we dwell, not in the love that we have to the Lord Jesus Christ, which always is weaker and less than it ought to be, but in the love that He has to us, which is changeless and endless, our Sanctification must advance. Atmosphere has an astonishing effect on character. 'Flowers,' Mr Ruskin says in a familiar passage of his most familiar book, 'flourish rightly only in the garden of some one who loves them.' And now, suppose Him to be the Gardener. Morning and evening, week after week, when the enemies are most indefatigable and most appealing, and when you can do nothing at all—suppose Him to be the Gardener.

I cannot tell the art
By which such bliss is given;
I know Thou hast my heart,
And I—have heaven.

'Let there be Love,' the Spirit says. 'O be sure,' He says, 'of the Gardener whose name is Love! For then are you sure of Sanctification.'

3. *The Spirit is Quickener.*—God's third majestic imperative was, 'Let there be Life'; and the result was Pentecost. The special and crowning era of the Holy Spirit began. And the note of the new era was Life, life which can prevail over every obstacle and win every triumph. That is His third word for the solitary disciple, as it was for the community of disciples. The life which we have from the Spirit of God is so wonderful that no language does justice to it. It is quiet, and it is strong. So still and quiet it is that nobody hears its inner movement. So strong it is, and contagious, and abundant, that everybody sooner or later is cognizant of its presence, and either is attracted to it or is repelled from it. Life in the wood or the orchard has none of the noise of the wheels and engines in the factory; but it is more prevailing by far. The Holy Ghost is silent in His working; but He so possesses those who yield to Him that they are lifted to other levels, and invested with other resources. The Christian before his Pentecost is to the Christian after his Pentecost as the child to the man. However you look at him—whether in his abhorrence of sin, or in his understanding of truth, or in his resemblance to Christ, or in his influence over men—his life has been multiplied a hundredfold.

Moreover, it is manifold. Peter has still

Peter's individuality; John has still John's; Mary continues to be Mary. Life in the Spirit can use all sorts of types and temperaments, and it longs and needs to have them all.

It is deep also, and it is clear. It has its hidden seclusions and retirements. It is maintained by communion, and meditation, and the shutting of the door, and the seeing of the Father's face. Those are its depths, and it cannot prosper without them. But it manifests its quality in the commonest details. It leads some of us into the market, and gives us calmness and holiness in the clamour of voices and the clash of interests. It sets many within the home, with its multitudinous cares and little annoyances; and there the peace of God garrisons the mind, and makes the speech considerate and kindly. The life's centre is in the thick darkness where God is, but the life's circumference is everywhere.

Oft in a dark and lonely place
I hush my hastened breath,
To hear the comfortable words
Thy loving Spirit saith;
And feel my safety in Thy hand
From every kind of death.

Then in the secret of my soul,
Though hosts my peace invade,
Though through a waste and weary land
My lonely way be made,
Thou, even Thou, wilt comfort me—
I need not be afraid.

Still in the solitary place
I would awhile abide,
Till with the solace of Thy love
My heart is satisfied;
And all my hopes of happiness
Stay calmly at Thy side.[1]

And it is being perfected. If our one desire is to respond to the Spirit of God, He will fill our nature to its utmost capacity with His truth and grace and power, and we shall advance to new altitudes. He is always expanding the capacity, so that in Him we go from strength to strength.[2]

[1] A. L. Waring.
[2] A. Smellie, *Lift up your Heart*, 47.

The Limits of Liberty

1 Cor. vi. 12.—'All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.'

Someone has said that a Christian has no rights, he has only duties. That is a very striking statement, and seems to sound the note of the heroic. It may have served its purpose as a word of warning to men who were always insisting on their rights. But for all that it should never have been spoken, whatever purposes it may have served, for it is utterly antagonistic to the spirit of the gospel of our Lord. If there is one thing Paul insists on more than another, it is the rights of the believer in Christ Jesus. He argues with a passionate intensity for the liberties of every Christian. So far from it being the case that a Christian has no rights, there is no man with rights so incontestable. They are to be cherished at whatever cost, and in the teeth of angriest opposition.

But then, having insisted upon that, with all the emphasis of inspiration, Paul, with his wonderful knowledge of the heart, flashes light on the dangers of that liberty. All things are lawful to me, but all are not expedient. A Christian is one who is willing to forgo. He uses his liberties as not abusing them; he recognizes limits in their exercise. These limits are determined by one or other of three interests.

1. Our liberty is limited *in the interests of our personal safety.*

There is a passage in one of the Epistles which says, 'Touch not; taste not; handle not.' Perhaps no passage in the Scripture has been oftener misunderstood than that one. It has been quoted as inspired direction to those who were yielding to temptation. It has been used as the motto of abstinence societies, as though it embodied apostolic counsel. Whereas the very opposite is true: these are the words of Paul's antagonists, and against their view of life he is in arms. 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof'—that is the ringing note of the Apostle. There is nothing in it common or unclean: everything is to be received with thanksgiving. But then, having uttered that grand truth, Paul proceeds to limit it in exercise by the consideration of his

immortal well-being. All things are lawful to me, says the Apostle, but I will not be brought under the power of any. In other words, this brave and thoughtful man, who insisted so passionately on his rights in Christ, deliberately limited these rights in the interest of his individual safety. 'I keep under my body,' says the Apostle, 'lest I myself should be a castaaway.' I keep under my body is our version, but the word in the original is far more graphic. It is a word borrowed from the prize-ring: it means, I beat my body black and blue. Now, whatever Paul was, he was no ascetic, and certainly he never preached asceticism. Yet here, lest he should be rejected at the end, deliberately, and in sternest fashion, he limited his large liberty in Christ.

¶ I imagine that we all wish to enjoy our bodies and the world to which they give us access; and I am sure that we were meant to. They are among the best of the good things of life. But we cannot enjoy them if we have not control over them; and it has been truly said that 'nothing is evil if a man have the mastery over it, and nothing is good if it have mastery over a man.' To keep the mastery of your own life in your own hands is the secret of happiness.

The driver of a motor-car, if he be a wise man, will occasionally try his brakes in order to see that they are in full use should the need arise; and the knowledge that they are available for full use gives him confidence. A well-known writer has told us that he forces himself to write a certain number of words each day in order to keep himself in trim, with a view to the moment when the real inspiration shall come. And although an athlete will go into special training for a special occasion, he will, even while the great event is still far off, exercise himself less strenuously and at odd times in order to keep himself on the threshold (as it were) of his form.

We need not always be exercising mastery; indeed I think that the lighter we keep our hold on life the better; but the mastery should always be available, ready on call.[1]

2. Our liberty is limited *in the interests of Christian brotherhood.*

The classical instance of this Christian attitude is found in this first Epistle to the Corinthians. The Apostle pictures a Corinthian Christian invited to dinner by a friend. That friend is a heathen man, and in comparatively humble life. Now in the food that was set upon the table it was almost certain there would be temple meat: meat, that is, of beasts that had been sacrificed, and then sold to the market by the priests. And the difficulty for the Christian guest was this, Was he at liberty to eat that meat? If it had been offered to idols in the temple, would not eating it mean fellowship with idols? It was about that difficulty that they wrote to Paul, and his answer is supremely noble. Go to your dinner, he says, and ask no questions. Eat what is set before you and be thankful. If you start worrying about things like *that*, you will do conscience irreparable mischief. 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.'

But suppose that next that Christian brother there is sitting another and a weaker Christian. He is struggling to be true to Christ, but the pull of the old life is terrible. And he turns to his stronger brother by his side, and he says to him anxiously: 'That is Temple meat.' The question was (and it was a daily question), What was the stronger brother to do then? If he partook, his neighbour might partake, and that might be opening the gate to ruin. He would go home beset by the dark sense that he was again in fellowship with devils. But, on the other hand, if he did *not* partake, out of consideration for that weaker conscience, what became of his liberty in Christ? So they wrote to Paul about that also, and we know how he replied. As a Christian man, he said, it is your bounden duty to consider the weakness of your brother. Knit into fellowship by Jesus Christ, called to the bearing of each other's burdens, God forbid that you should use your liberty to offend one of these little ones.

If we believe in the Fatherhood of God, then we believe in the brotherhood of man. And only he has got the mind of Christ to whom that thought of brotherhood is regulative, not only in the exercise of power, but also in the exercise of liberty. There are many things in life that are quite lawful, and on whose lawfulness we must insist. But if to our brother they be fraught with peril, then for our brother's sake, if we be Christians, we are called to the limitations of our liberty.

[1] 'Philemon,' *From My Window*, 94.

¶ Once, in my New Zealand days, I revisited England. Shall I ever forget the excitement of sighting the English coast and of anchoring in Plymouth Sound? We sent telegrams to the home folks, telling them the exact hour at which they might expect us next day. Then once more the great ship stood out to sea and began her voyage up the Channel. And off the Nore, down came the fog! Down, too, to our unspeakable disgust, went the anchor! There we waited and waited and waited, half deafened by the screamings and hootings of the horns that answered to our own, and half blinded by the frantic efforts that we made to pierce the all-enshrouding mists and see the land nearby! Presently the captain came sauntering along the deck, a picture of colossal calm.

'This is very exasperating,' I observed. 'We sent telegrams from Plymouth, telling the people at home when to meet us, and they'll be waiting at the docks now. Is there no possibility of getting on?'

'All very fine for you!' the skipper replied cheerily. 'You are on a ten-thousand ton liner. And you would like me to go on up the river, crumpling up everything we happen to strike as though it were made of brown paper! No, no; we've got the other ships to think of!'[1]

3. Our liberty is to be limited *in the interests of the gospel.*

In the ninth chapter of this Epistle we have an instance of that motive. Paul has been arguing, with overwhelming power, for the right of the preachers of the Word to receive payment. He appeals to Scripture—he argues by analogy—he urges the great plea of common sense. He gives a demonstration irrefutable of the right of gospel-preachers to be paid. And then, with one of those swift turns of his which help us to know him and to love him, he says: But I—I have not used this right, lest I should hinder the gospel of Christ. There is an instance also in the life of Jesus. It is when He was asked to pay the Temple tax. It is only Matthew who narrates that incident, and it is natural that he should tell it, for Matthew had been a tax-gatherer himself once, and would be interested in taxes to the end. Well, when Jesus heard of the demand, He said to Peter: What thinkest thou, Simon, of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute—of their own children or strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers; and Jesus answered, Then are the children free. What He meant was that *He* was free, for the Temple was His Father's house. He could have claimed exemption as a right. But then had He insisted on His rights, is it not easy to see what would have happened? Jesus saw in an instant what would happen. He had proclaimed the sanctity of law: now men would say He was a law-breaker. And so, not with His eye upon His own, but with His eye on the unbelieving world, the tax was paid lest they should be offended. In other words, Christ limited His liberty in the supreme interests of the gospel.

If we are members of the body of Christ, then we have a duty to the world. It is no part of a believer's calling to consult the *opinion* of the world. All we are taught is that in our use of freedom we must remember those who are without, and how, by what we allow ourselves in Christ, they are like to be affected towards the gospel. If the kind of life that we are living makes it less easy to believe in Christ; if our behaviour, whether at work or at play, is silently hardening anybody's heart, then, though everything we do is justified, and well within the boundaries of our liberties, in the eyes of Jesus there is something wrong. All things are lawful, but all are not expedient, because around us there is a Christless world, and men with their poor blind eyes are judging Christ by what they see in His professing people.

¶ 'We must go in more and more for holiness,' said Mrs Booth. Didn't Tertullian tell us that he was brought to Christ, not because he had studied the Scriptures, but because he had seen the Christians' lives, and coveted the something they possessed that resulted in that. And the faith never really spreads in any other way.[1]

[1] F. W. Boreham, *The Uttermost Star*, 30.

[1] A. J. Gossip, *In Christ's Stead*, 81.

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Union with God

1 Cor. vi. 17.—'He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.'

This is a sentence deep as eternal truth can make it. Yet it stands in a context full of the harshest realities of tempted human life. St Paul is speaking not of a saint but of a young man in Corinth, who, it may be, a short time before was a worshipper of that tremendous idol of sensual lust which Corinth was a conspicuous temple for. The study of evil, however, is not what we are aiming at; because we notice this, that the Apostle, who was engaged in a very troublesome and difficult work, the work of discipline in the Corinthian Church, dropped the subject he had in hand, and took up the subject which he had in heart. The subject which he had in hand was the sin that had crept into the Church, the presence of immorality and impurity in the Church, and he dealt with them faithfully; but as a good apostle of Jesus Christ he did not limit himself to dealing with sin. We have got to preach the kingdom of righteousness, of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; and so he breaks away from the subject which he has in hand to the subject which he has in heart, as much as to say, 'That is what I would like to talk to you about if I could.' And we see that in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, where he has again to deplore the declension of a great many who had forsaken the love of God, in the midst of his tears and in the midst of his mourning he says: 'Our life is in heaven, and it is from thence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned according to the body of his glory.' We see it is a spontaneous thought that broke into the midst of the death that was breaking into the Church. The thought that broke in was this: Our life is in heaven, we are joined to the Lord, and we are one spirit with Him. That is a great truth.

1. Our life, then, is this glorious life of which we are told, 'He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.' We may be sure of this, that there is no necessity whatever for anyone who has such a life as this to be disturbed from it. If anybody had a right to be, it was a person who had apparently been spending his strength in vain and labouring, according to the outward judgment, for nought. There is not anything more likely to break the heart of anyone who has to preach the Word of God than to find that his ministry has the Corinthian or Philippian accompaniment of apostasy. And yet it is not so with the Apostle. In the midst of all this disappointment, when we see very little of God in the primitive Church, very little to encourage him, everything to provoke tears, he breaks out into what is nothing less than a psalm in a sentence, 'He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit,' and goes up into heaven itself, as it were, in order that he may escape from the depression and the difficulty that he finds down here. If anyone had a right to be discouraged, Paul had; but he was not discouraged, because he could not be discouraged without losing his union, and he could not sacrifice that without losing everything that he held dear; and if we are one with God we shall not be discouraged.

There are a great many centrifugal influences which would take us away from our centre all the time; there are a thousand forces which remove us from blessedness; but, even amid all this, the strong constraint of a Redeemer's love which we have felt and known, and that fellowship with Him which we have in service and in everything else—the great magnetism is stronger than that which contradicts it, the positive more than the negative. 'What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword'—the being slain all day long for the Kingdom's sake? 'Nay; in all these things we are more than conquerors.' Now these verses constitute in the Apostle's mind the creation of an adverse environment with which he proposes that the life which is within him can deal. How much can we stand? How much will it take to disunite us from God? A cross word, a misunderstanding, a commercial loss, a little difference in the amount we carry about with us, and which we are perfectly sure we are not going to carry away—a very little difference of this kind will separate some people from God. A bankruptcy court will do it, and with some people something very much short of a bankruptcy court will do it. To have an account pre-

sented twice will put some people out of the Kingdom of God.

It is well to realize what our adverse environment may be, so that we may better understand what can separate us, and be better saved. The Apostle had no monopoly of holiness. Like him we, too, can say, 'Jesus, I trust Thee to keep me through all surroundings.' Put 'life or death or any other creature' amongst the centrifugal influences, and, when you have put them there, put in this great centripetal sentence, which takes us up to the source from whence we come and from which we live, 'He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.' It is pantheistic; but we do not propose to let the theosophists have all the pantheism to themselves. There is an experience of union with the Lord which is rightly characterized as pantheistic, in which God has met all the needs of the soul, and has become the indwelling power of the human spirit. Christ can be all in all in the twentieth century as well as in the first, and we do not need to think Him less than He wishes to be to those who trust in Him.

2. Of all things that separate us, and they are many, the one great cause of separation, perhaps, is the fact that the love which is in the world seems to be of a non-permanent character. The greatest thing in the world is love.

¶ I never ask God, or hardly ever, for outward things; I do not know that I ever asked Him for glory or honour, and I hope I never shall; and I very seldom ask Him for material things apart from the Kingdom; but I sometimes say things like this, that if God will give me three or four good friends, I think I can manage to continue to the end, because love is the machinery of life and the motive power.[1]

Strange to say, that love is just what seems to be one of the separable things in life. You have not only your own grave open before you, but a great many other people's graves; and as we are getting further on in life our way-marks cease to be milestones and become gravestones. We have all had experience of this apparent separability of love, in which we seem to see so much that contradicts God. There is a picture of John Wesley preaching on a gravestone in Epworth Churchyard. It was very well for him to do so; but the funeral was not a recent one. God can help you to do something like what Wesley did on a recent gravestone—He can help you to say, 'He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit,' in the midst of trials and bereavements, and, what is harder still, when you turn after the first experience of desolation to look back at them.

There is a frontier between the two worlds, but it is like the frontier that we see between the countries on the Continent, where there is an area of delimitation on either side; and not only does the Saviour come and walk with men, but the spirits of the just made perfect come and walk with us, and are deeply interested in the progress of human souls in holiness, and in the way they take their thrones and claim their crowns. They come and walk with us in order that we may be able to say and to sing that we are one family, one Church above and beneath, though now divided by the narrow stream of death. There is no separation for those who are joined to the Lord, and are one spirit in Him.

3. Next to death there is not anything much worse than loneliness. Misunderstanding is bad, but loneliness in some ways is harder to bear, especially for social beings, and we are all social when we are at our best. Nothing is so bad as being disjoined from those whom we love by those isolations which come necessarily in life, apart from death. Take a specimen—St John in the island, the loving St John, who was taken right away from the midst of his work, right away out into the sea, and put down out of sight, only a little way out of sight, of all those whom he had loved and laboured for, and set there, apparently, to end his days in nothingness. He says, 'I was in the island.' That is all he says about his loneliness; and a verse or two after he says, 'I was in the Spirit.' That will do; for he that is in the Spirit is joined to God. He is not lonely any more; he is not separated any more; and his pains are over and his isolation is done, and what he begins with when he says in the first chapter of the Apocalypse, 'I was in the Spirit,' is only the first sentence of what turns out to be a great ladder which runs right up into heaven itself. Looking down upon us who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and after love, which is the essence of righteousness, the beloved Apostle

[1] J. Rendel Harris.

tells us that 'He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.' [1]

Lord Jesus, are we one with Thee?
O height, O depth of love!
With Thee we died upon the tree,
In Thee we live above.

Ascended now in glory bright,
Still one with us Thou art;
Nor life, nor death, nor depth, nor height,
Thy saints and Thee can part.

The Body a Temple

1 Cor. vi. 19.—'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?'

HUMAN nature has a deep-rooted tendency to speak and act as if the body counted for nothing in religion. So in different ages men have come forward declaring that between spirit and matter there yawns a gulf so wide that nothing which the body either does or endures can have any real effect on the conscience or heart. Of course not infrequently their aim in thus splitting life into two separate compartments was to leave the field clear for the license of ignoble passion. Men felt more free to go wrong, they found it easier to give the rein to sensual appetite, once they had shut their eyes and swallowed this utterly false theory that the body can be used in any way you choose without injuring or staining the soul.

Now common sense, the instinctive voice of nature, is enough to disprove this. We have only to think quietly for a moment to see that such an argument is not only baseless but vile, and that no amount of reasoning can make it either true or respectable. The influence of matter upon spirit, of things upon the soul within, is the most familiar fact in life.

¶ 'As men watch the appearance of the sunset,' says a recent writer, 'thoughts and feelings arise in their hearts that move their being in unnumbered ways. Youth is fired with high ideals; age consoled with peaceful hopes; saints as they pray see heaven opened; sinners feel conscience deeply stirred. Mourners are comforted; weary ones rested; artists inspired; lovers united; worldlings purified and softened as they gaze. In a short half-hour all is over; the mechanical process has come to an end; the gold has melted into grey. But countless souls, meanwhile, have been soothed, and solaced, and uplifted by that evening benediction from the far-off sky; and the course of human life to-day is modified and moulded by the setting of yesterday's sun.' [1]

So intimate is the bond between soul and body that it has naturally come to be employed as the very type of immediate union or alliance. Indeed every day we see new instances in which, owing to this indissociable connection, the soul has written its own character on the body. A man's nature peeps out in the glance of his eye, the touch of his hand, the tone and inflection of his voice, his unstudied and unconscious gestures and attitudes, even the peculiarities of his gait. It is not quite an accident that we read of John the Baptist, that 'he looked upon Jesus *as he walked*, and said, Behold the Lamb of God.' In many ways the soul moulds the body.

¶ Henry James tells us of Roderick Hudson, a brilliant, unprincipled, conceited young American artist who had been living a self-indulgent life in Rome when his mother and her adopted daughter, Mary Garland, who had been very anxious about him, came to visit him. Right in the middle of a sentence Roderick breaks off and says to his mother, 'What makes you look so odd? What has happened to your face these two years? It has changed its expression.' 'Your mother has prayed a great deal,' said Mary simply.[2]

In the same way, since the bond is a mutual one, the body helps to make the soul. If, then, our bodies are as real a part of our complete personality as our minds, no man who cares for truth, or who reverences the will of God, will dare to speak as though what happens to them, or the uses to which they may be put, were ultimately of no account.

¶ 'Olalla,' I said, 'the soul and the body are one, and mostly so in love. What the body chooses, the soul loves; where the body clings, the soul cleaves; body for body, soul to soul, they come together at God's signal; and the lower part (if we can call aught low)

[1] J. Rendel Harris, *Union with God*, 134.

[1] H. R. Mackintosh, *Life on God's Plan*, 130.
[2] A. MacColl, *The Sheer Folly of Preaching*, 139.

is only the footstool and foundation of the highest.' [1]

Let us not always say
'Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!'
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry 'All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more now, than flesh helps soul!' [2]

So let us ask how as Christian people we ought to look upon our bodies, and what new light is shed upon their part in life through the redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ.

1. *The Dignity of the Body.*—The text informs us what the Apostle believed about that. He has no hesitation in saying that these bodies of ours are temples of the Holy Ghost. Think what that metaphor of the temple meant. There had been a temple in Israel before, all compact of ivory and gold and marble; and not many years were to pass, from the date of this letter, till its hour struck and it passed away. But, ere it fell, its place had been taken by the redeemed personalities in which Christ was dwelling. So St Paul's argument is very simple—only this: God inhabits us; we inhabit our bodies; therefore our bodies are God's temple.

It is true our bodies never cease to be imperfect. There are frailties and treacheries of the body which beset us to the very end; and these Christ noted sympathetically when He found the disciples, who should have watched, sleeping for sorrow, and said: 'the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Then, besides that, there is the fact staring us in the face that the body is a perpetual avenue of temptation. Sometimes the cravings of the flesh come to be terrible, wolfish in their eagerness. When the broken will is swept away like a chip of timber tossed down the rapids, the gains of a year's self-control may be lost in five minutes. So the body keeps us in touch with all the sensuous allurements of the world. One comes to think of it as a storehouse of explosives, which may go off any moment if a lighted match be dropped.

This may seem to go dead against the dignity of the body, but there is another side, which is, that every appetite of the body is right and good in its own place, and that this is proved by the experience of Jesus Christ our Lord. His life shows the body in a new light. Think how Christ's body helped His ministry to the heavy-laden and sinful. How else could He have brought God's love into actual touch with their wants than through the medium of His body, His healing touch, His tears of sympathy, His words and looks and movements? And, beyond and above all that, it was through His mortal frame that Jesus Christ was capable of enduring all the depth of anguish a Saviour had to suffer, and, as St Peter says, bore our sins in His own body on the tree. So let us lay the truth to heart, that Christ has redeemed both parts of our nature, and that His will for us covers both the material and the spiritual.

Moreover, if the body is redeemed, it is no longer our own, and has to be cared for as particularly as honesty bids us care for some one else's property. The guarding of health is a part of religion. To neglect or squander our bodily powers is to steal what belongs to God. As Charles Kingsley said once, and no man had a better right to speak: 'There has always seemed to me something impious in the neglect of personal health. . . . I could not do half the good I do do, if it were not for the strength and activity some consider coarse and degrading.'

¶ Deep at the bottom of all our sense of uncleanness, of dirt, is the feeling, primitive, irresolvable, universal, of the sanctity of the body. Nothing in the material sphere can properly be dirty except the body. We speak of a 'dirty road,' but in an uninhabited world moist clay would be no more dirty than hard rock; it is the possibility of clay adhering to a foot which makes it mire. A dwelling-place is dirty when it is in a state to communicate defilement to the bodies moving about in it; a plate is dirty when it may attach unworthy matter to that which, we find, is to enter the holy place. This feeling about the body, no doubt, goes to explain why carnal sins have always seemed 'impure' in a special sense.[1]

2. *The Gravity of Bodily Sin.*—St Paul is warning the Corinthians against the foul prac-

[1] R. L. Stevenson, *Olalla.*
[2] Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

[1] E. Bevan, *Hellenism and Christianity.*

tices which made their city a by-word, and tainted every breath they drew. Some sins, as we know, have little connection with the body; they run their course within the mind. Of this class, malice, envy, irreverence are examples. But other sins are done against the body, directly hostile to its wholesome existence, and suicidal by their very nature. St Paul has a short way with such transgressions. Our body a temple? Well, a temple is where God dwells, and God can only dwell in a holy place. Therefore, every sin that leaves the body defiled or impaired is a desecration of the shrine. Sensuality is sacrilege.

Where lie the gravity and guilt of sins like gluttony, intemperance, or lust in any form? In this, for one thing, that they give the body the upper hand. The only right and safe thing is that the body shall always serve. Any attempt to reverse the Divine law of our nature, that part of us which is akin to God must rule, means a loss of true manhood and inevitable suffering. Forget this, and the appetite which was but a means in the Divine plan comes to be an end in itself. 'Hold off from sensuality,' Cicero writes, 'for if you once give yourself to it, you will not be able to think of anything else.'

Then, bodily sin is so heinous because it defiles what Christ has redeemed. The reason why Christ's atoning passion was endured, and followed by triumphant resurrection, lay in God's great purpose that our human nature, in both its parts, should be cleansed and restored in beauty and purity. For this He bore the shame, the grief, the scourging, the spitting, the awful desolation of the last hour. The aim and issue of it all was that we should become a habitation of God through the Spirit.

3. *The Prospects of the Body.*—What is supremely important here also is to fix in our minds the truth that the body has its own real share in the hopes and promises that cluster round the name of Jesus. The heathen said—our modern heathen say still—the body will perish like the animals; what matters it how we treat it? let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. Nay, replies Christian faith, there is a second and nobler chapter in the story even of this frail tenement we here inhabit. God, who raised up Jesus, shall in due time also quicken your mortal bodies.

¶ Nearly three hundred years ago, Bishop Hall quaintly said: 'It is abundant comfort to us that our Head is in the fruition of that glory whereto we, the poor labouring part, sought to aspire. Our Head is above water, though we, the limbs, are yet wading through the stream.'

How that is to come about nobody can explain. All that Scripture suggests is that the relation of the present to the future body is like the relation of seed sown to springing grain; and that, clearly, is a relation, not of identity, but of causation and continuity. There will be likeness, so far as that is needed to maintain a living oneness with the old experience of earth; but much more, there will be newness and difference, for the former things have passed away.

So then, reverence is owed by us to the body, in its own real measure. It has to be consciously laid, no less than heart and soul, upon the Divine altar, and consecrated to Him we love. All its infirmities, its treacheries, its limitations, are some day to give place and pass away. 'Christ shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory.' There speaks the voice of apostolic trust and hope; and our own poet's words only proclaim the same secret and repeat the same prophecy:—

It is an old belief
  That on some solemn shore,
Beyond the sphere of grief,
  Dear friends will meet once more.
Beyond the sphere of time,
  And sin, and fate's control,
Serene in changeless prime,
  Of body and of soul.
That creed I fain would keep,
  That hope I'll not forgo;
Eternal be the sleep,
  Unless to waken so.

Ye are not Your Own

1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.—'Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price.'

The fact which the Apostle Paul suddenly thrusts before the Corinthians is an amazing fact. He does not try to prove it. In pursuance of the practical argument in which he

is engaged he turns round all at once and asks those to whom he is addressing himself: Or do you not know that ye are not your own? He appeals straight to their own consciousness, to that in them which is deepest. It is quite possible that they had never before thought of not being their own; on the contrary, like most other human beings, they had simply taken for granted that they were their own; and here comes St Paul with a sort of spiritual search-light, and all at once out of the black darkness there comes forth this really awful truth: *I am not my own.*

1. *What Ownership Means.*—As a rule, three things are more or less consciously and distinctly implied in the word. It implies, first of all, the right to *exclusive possession*; second, the right to *exclusive enjoyment or use*; and third, the right to *do as one likes* with one's property. But a moment's reflection is sufficient to show us that we are not 'our own' in any of these senses.

(1) *We can lay no claim to absolute possession.* If we had created ourselves we should belong to ourselves, but we are not self-created. Is it not as though a man were to go into a carpenter's or an ironworker's or some other workshop and, taking the material found there, were to make out of it some article and then claim it as entirely his own? What would the owner of the timber or iron or other material say to him? Would he not say, 'My good sir, do not forget that the material you have worked up is mine; the labour you have expended on it may be yours, but that constitutes only a part—perhaps a small part—of the value of the article you have produced'?

Nor did we sustain ourselves for a great part of our lives. We do not sustain ourselves now. The whole world is busy to keep us alive. Were every one to stand aside, saying in effect, 'Here is one who thinks he can do without help; let him try,' we should starve, we should shiver, we should die, and our body would lie unburied. One has only to think for a very short time to see that we are bound up with one another, that we belong to one another; that to be cut off from one another, to be independent, is to be dead—as a tender plant is dead which is torn up out of the soil and left uprooted to the devastating work of time.[1]

[1] J. A. Hutton, *Discerning the Times*, 261.

(2) *Nor can we lay any claim to the exclusive enjoyment or use of ourselves.* We dare not become slaves of self. All the ages since Christ have been charged with an undefined but overmastering sense of obligation, a sense of something, not for self, that we must do. This not only urged Paul and Augustine and Xavier to laborious missions; it not only strengthened Hus and Latimer to die; it not only inspired Wyclif and Luther and Knox to tireless efforts for religious reformation; it was essentially this same spirit that kept Caxton to his tools, till he had wrought out his idea into a printing press. It was this that forced John Hampden to refuse to pay 'ship-money,' though it would have been cheaper for him to have paid it ten times over than to have involved himself in a lifelong struggle with the Stuarts. It was this that took the Pilgrim Fathers to that bleak, wintry shore where they felt they must try to found a new and freer England; this that throughout these later generations has nerved the patriots and reformers who have brought the world to what is best to-day.

¶ 'Well do I remember that occasion,' he wrote long after, 'how in the gladness of my heart I poured out my soul before God, and again and again confessing my grateful love to Him who had done everything for me I besought Him to give me some work for Him, as an outlet for love and gratitude; some self-denying service, no matter what it might be, however trying or however trivial; something with which He would be pleased, and which I might do for Him who had done so much for me. Well do I remember, as in unreserved consecration I put myself, my life, my friends, my all upon the altar, the deep solemnity that came over my soul with the assurance that my offering was accepted. The presence of God became unutterably real and blessed, and I well remember . . . stretching myself on the ground, and lying there before Him with unspeakable awe and unspeakable joy. For what service I was accepted I knew not. But a deep consciousness that I was not my own took possession of me, which has never since been effaced.'[1]

Let us get hold of that idea, that fact—that nothing good has come to be established amongst men, except at a price, except by devotedness and suffering, except by faith in the future and

[1] Dr and Mrs Howard Taylor, *Hudson Taylor*, 70.

consequent pain; let us get hold of the fact that without shedding of blood there is no emancipation from any former darkness; and let us understand that all the light of life, as we know it and enjoy it, came to us by the way of the Cross, by the payment of an incalculable price. That being so, we have a duty. At least one thing is certain, 'we are not our own.' There must be no longer any talk amongst people who claim to have grown out of their childhood of being their own masters, and so forth.

Everything which we prize has come to us through the faith and sorrow, through the blood and tears, of those who have gone before. And we feel the obligation to pass it on unsoiled, unreduced, even to build something greater upon their ancient foundations.

¶ We shall never go far astray, or leave the middle of the path on God's great highway through life, so long as we remember that one age lives for the sake of the generation that is following; that we are not our own; that we belong not to our fathers only, but to our children.[1]

(3) *We cannot do as we like with ourselves.* In the physical sphere we are limited. We can determine our own actions, but we cannot determine their results. We are in the grip of laws that nothing can resist. In the social sphere we are limited. Crusoe-like, we may regard ourselves as on a desert island, and say, 'I am my own; I can do as I like.' But that is manifestly limited by the complex social order of this twentieth century. 'I own you, or a good part of you,' says Society; 'my opinions and my customs enclose and dominate you.' This social order puts our prosperity, our comfort, our very life in the hands of others to no small degree. In the moral sphere we are limited. A young man in a bank says he can, if he choose, being in charge of the books, make false entries and embezzle money; but, so acting, he, as belonging to a certain civil order, is bound hand and foot to certain inevitable penal consequences. So our whole life is set in, and belongs to, a Divine moral order more real and potent than any civil order. We can tell a lie, or use foul language if we choose, but we cannot keep that foul language from defiling our nature, or that lie from deceiving our own spirit. We can be hard, selfish, covetous; but we cannot help that lust for gold narrowing our own life and our own soul. We are not our own. We belong to a Divine moral order, irresistible. But over and above this, above the physical and social and moral orders that hold and limit us, we belong to a great redemptive order. We are not our own, because we have been 'bought with a price.'

2. *Christ our Owner.*—We belong to Christ for we are bought with a price—even the passion and sacrifice of our Holy Redeemer. The greatness of the love is measured by the greatness of the price paid; and the greatness of the price paid defies all words and transcends all thought. When we try to realize it we are overwhelmed with the mystery, and we veil our faces in awe. We summon to our aid such human analogies as experience suggests or as history records. The devotion of the friend risking his life to save another life as dear to him as his own; the bravery of the captain and the crew sinking calmly and resolutely into their watery grave, without a shudder, without a regret, disdaining to survive while one weak woman or one feeble child is left in peril; the heroism of the patriot hostage condemning himself to a certain and cruel death rather than forfeit his honour on the one hand, or consent to terms disastrous to his country's welfare on the other—all these have the highest value as examples of human courage and self-devotion. But how little, after all, does any such sacrifice help us to realize the magnitude of the Great Sacrifice. The analogy fails just where we look for its aid. It is the infinity of the price paid for our redemption that is its essential characteristic. It is the fact that God gave not a life like our lives, not a weak, erring, sin-stricken, sorrow-laden victim like ourselves, but gave His only-begotton Son, gave His Eternal Word, to become flesh, to work and to suffer, to live and to die, for our sakes. It is the fact that the Glory of the Invisible God condescended to visit this earth, to hunger and thirst, to be despised and to be crucified. The sacrifice is unique, because the Person is unique. It is this divinity in the sacrifice that gives it power to reconcile and bind our hearts to God. It is God Himself proving how much He loves us by the price which He is willing to pay for us.

¶ 'The cost of a thing,' says Thoreau, 'is *the*

[1] J. A. Hutton, *Guidance from Francis Thompson in Matters of Faith*, 25.

amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run.' [1]

3. *Self-possession.*—It is by being slaves to Christ that we are free and attain to self-possession. To be owned by a man is to be a slave; to be owned by God is to be a free man—free in the fullest sense of that word. We are the sworn soldiers, the very bond slaves, of a perfect Lord. Our lives and every possibility that our lives contain belong absolutely to another, whose service is the only reality of our own freedom, or our own perfection.

¶ Nietzsche said that the great hours are those in which some bondage is broken and we are heading for freedom. But such a statement requires a careful handling by anyone who is liable to succumb to any bright little formula for life. For the soul of man has had great hours also when, on the other hand, it suddenly hated its so-called freedom, and returned to some bondage dearer than freedom. St Paul begins almost every Epistle with 'Paul, the slave of Christ': it is his way of saying 'Hallelujah!' [2]

We find ourselves by losing ourselves, we own ourselves in being owned, we possess ourselves in being possessed. When my reason, discerning truth, says, 'I am thine,' my reason finds its true life, knowledge; when my will says to righteousness, 'I am thine,' my will finds its proper life, freedom; when my heart, touched by the love of God, responds, 'I am Thine,' my heart finds its life and joy; when my soul, the vital centre of my entire being, discerning God, says, 'I am Thine,' the glory of my light flames forth.' [3]

¶ In the old days, before Abraham Lincoln's slave emancipation, there was put up in the slave auction in New Orleans a beautiful mulatto girl. The bids rose from 500 dollars to 700, then a voice outside the crowd called 750 dollars. Higher and higher the bids went, until, at 1450 dollars, the stranger got the girl. He turned out to be a Northerner, and she hated the thought of becoming his slave. The next morning he called at the house where she was. She said sadly, 'Sir, I am ready to go with you.' 'But I do not want you to go with me. Look over this,' handing her the paper of her freedom. 'I bought you that you might be free.' She exclaimed, 'You bought me that I might be free? Am I free? Free? Can I do as I like with myself?' He answered, 'Yes, you are free.' Then she said, with sobs of joy, 'Oh, sir, I will go with you and be your servant for ever.' [1]

'Nay, not a servant,' sayest Thou?—'a friend!'
Well, if Thou wilt a friend! If such a love
Can bear no more the distance that my heart
Would put between, then draw me nearer now;
Call me Thy friend—Thy friend!
I will be one
With Thee in sympathy, and my desire
Shall be as Thine, and I will go with Thee
And share Thy labours—yea, as friend with Friend,
Seek as Thou seekest—as Thou lovest, love! [2]

[1] R. L. Stevenson, *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, 107.
[2] J. A. Hutton, *Guidance from Francis Thompson in Matters of Faith*, 48.
[3] A. Goodrich.

[1] F. B. Cowl.
[2] E. H. Divall, *A Believer's Songs*, 15.

What is a Christian?

1 Cor. vii. 19.—'Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.'

Gal. v. 6.—'For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.'

Gal. vi. 15.—'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new ceature.'

WHAT is a Christian? The answer is found in these three sentences of the Apostle Paul. It is not found in one of these texts alone. They must be taken together. In each passage St Paul states, first of all, certain things which do not prove a man to be a Christian. 'Neither circumcision,' he says, 'availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision.' These words on the distinctive ordinance of a peculiar people sound like the words of a day. But the ordinance stands not for one religious act but for a religious tendency of thought, a certain kind of religious life. It refers to a character rather than a deed, a character to which conventional rectitude and ceremonial consistency are essentials. This is in the world to-day, and therefore the Apostle writes for us.

But he speaks of another tendency, and points the failure of another character. All

were not on the side of conformity to ordinances. Many had 'given up all that.' Because circumcision was unavailing, they were making too much of uncircumcision. It was a mystery to St Paul that men should extol their bonds, and glory in ceremonial requirements. But it was at least equally a mystery to him that men should put their trust in merely theoretic freedom, and boast themselves of a liberty which they never exercised for the purposes of a higher faith or worthier manhood.

O we boast us of our law,
Glory in our gospel light,
Pity those who cannot draw
Fresh the living water bright;
We are favoured, we are blest,
We have heard the joyful sound,
We are sons of God confessed,
We are free who once were bound.
Bless the Lord who unto us
Is in mercy plenteous.

Ah! but what if we are still
Walking on in sinful ways,
Keeping a rebellious will,
Lusting for the world's poor praise?
What if we are growing old,
None the wiser for the rod?
What if we have faith in gold,
Not in either man, or God?
Shall we praise the Lord that we
Have nor faith nor charity? [1]

Over against circumcision and uncircumcision, and all the class of objects similar to them, the Apostle sets the things that are essential and vital, the things that prove a man a Christian. Let us see what they are.

1. The first is startling enough to arrest attention. It is *the keeping of the commandments of God.* But that is what Christ Himself said. When the young ruler came running and asked, kneeling, 'Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?' Christ's answer was, 'Keep the commandments.' For indeed no other answer can be given. If we keep the commandments of God then are we right with God. He asks no other of us, or can ask. And it is of no moment to inquire, What are the commandments? Any commandments will do, if they are God's. The commandments we are familiar with. 'Thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; honour thy father and thy mother'—those will do. Or, if we prefer it, the summary of the commandments so memorably expressed by one of the prophets, when he said, 'What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'

But who has done it? In the Westminster Shorter Catechism there is a question which runs: 'Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?' And the answer is, 'No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.' The young ruler thought that he had kept the commandments, but he was quickly undeceived. Jesus took the eighth commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal,' and showed him that he had not kept it, and could not keep it, unless he sold all that he had and gave to the poor. It is probable, although we know of only one actual case, that in the time of our Lord there were not a few who thought they had kept them all from their youth up. It was for this reason that He delivered the Sermon on the Mount. For what is the Sermon on the Mount from first to last but an explanation of what is meant by keeping the commandments? 'He that looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.'

In our day the attitude is different. No one with the Sermon on the Mount in his hands is hardy enough to say, 'All these have I kept from my youth up.' The attitude now is that we cannot be expected to keep them, that something less than keeping must be sufficient, and that if we do justly and love mercy and walk humbly with our God *in a measure* all is bound to be well with us. But how can God accept a partial obedience? How can He have fellowship with the half saint who is half a sinner? How can He wink at the breaking of the everlasting laws of righteousness, upon which the very universe is hung, and of which all the commandments are but intelligible expressions? Eternal life is nothing if it is not walking with God; and as somebody asks very pointedly, 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?' We had better accept it at once, however it go

[1] Walter C. Smith.

against the natural man in us, that to be right with God we must keep the commandments in the sense of the Sermon on the Mount, that is to say, by being 'perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.' Whereupon we are bound to admit that we cannot do it.

What then? Then begins the gospel. For let it now be confessed that there is no gospel, no Christ, and no Christianity in anything that we have yet said. It is all out of the Old Testament. It is all law. Even the summary of the commandments, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself,' incomparable as it is, and accepted by our Lord, is taken from the Old Testament. Christianity begins when we turn from the first sentence quoted from St Paul to the second.

2. What is it that proves a man to be a Christian? St Paul's second answer is that it is *faith working through love*. In that answer we are arrested at once by the introduction of a person. For we cannot have faith in a thing. Who is that person? It is the Lord Jesus Christ. To be a Christian is to have faith in Christ. And if there are more kinds of faith than one, it is to have that kind of faith which works through love. For the keeping of the commandments still holds. It is not Christianity, but it is accepted by Christ. As He said, He came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it. Christianity is faith in Christ to the keeping of the commandments, the way of keeping them being through love.

Let us take the sum of the commandments as Christ accepted it: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.' How does faith in Christ make us able to do that? By the offer of Christ Himself. Is He worth loving? Faith tells us that. It tells us what He has done for us. We put ourselves among the 'lost' whom He came to seek and to save; we turn for salvation to Him; and at that very moment He meets us with His 'Son, daughter, be of good cheer, thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.' Whereupon we see Him as He is, altogether worthy of our love and waiting for it. We love Him, because He first loved us.

Now in loving Christ we love both God and man. As He said, 'He that loveth me, loveth my Father also.' And as we may say, turning other words of His round a little, 'Inasmuch as ye do it unto me, ye do it unto the least of these my brethren.' And what is this but to keep the commandments? For the sum of the commandments (let us say it again) is, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.'

Lovest thou God as thou oughtest, then lovest thou likewise thy brethren;
One is the sun in heaven, and one, only one, is Love also.
Bears not each human figure the godlike stamp on his forehead?
Readest thou not in his face thine origin? Is he not sailing
Lost like thyself on an ocean unknown, and is he not guided
By the same stars that guide thee? [1]

This, then, is the Christian, and there is no other. He keeps the commandments. Not in the Old Testament sense of striving to love God with all his heart and his neighbour as himself, and ever failing ignominiously. Still less in the pharisaic sense of taking the commandments one by one and saying, 'All these have I kept,' though there is no emotion of love to God or man in the heart. Such was the elder son of the parable, rude with his father and contemptuous towards his brother. The Christian keeps the commandments because he loves Christ, who is both God and man. And he loves Christ because he has rested upon Him alone for salvation.

3. St Paul's third statement is that such a Christian is *a new creation*. The faith which worketh by love is more than a transfiguration. In all outward reflection, however great the glory reflected, there is the element of instability. The glory of the Christian is not a glory that passes away, as was the glory that blazed in the face of Moses when he came down from the mount. It is more than a transfiguration. It is a creation. As at the beginning God saw all things which He had created, and said, 'Very good'; so now He sees us in our shield and looks upon us in the face of His anointed, and although we still fail of the keeping of many of the commandments taken by themselves, He sees no iniquity in us. We are a

[1] Longfellow, *The Children of the Lord's Supper*.

new creation, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, and once more He is able to regard His own handiwork and to say, 'Very good.'

¶ A man may work brass to great beauty and perfection, but no artificer can work it into gold. To change our natures must be the work of Omnipotence. The change required to make us fit to enjoy heaven is not like that of the snake which has cast its skin, and yet remains a reptile still; it is the change of the caterpillar when it dies, and its crawling life ceases; but from its body rises the butterfly, a new creature with a new nature. To hew a block of marble from the quarry and carve it into a noble statue; to break up a waste wilderness and turn it into a garden of flowers; to melt a lump of iron-stone and forge it into watch-springs—all these are mighty changes. Yet they all come short of the change which every child of Adam requires, for they are much the same thing in a new shape; but man needs a change as great as a resurrection from the dead. He must become a new creature.[1]

Finish then Thy new Creation,
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored in Thee.

The Uttermost Farthing

1 Cor. vii. 22.—'For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freedman; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's bondservant.'

THIS passage is an echo from an old social state, happily passed away. Slavery, plainly acknowledged as such, was everywhere, and Christianity had not yet declared against it. St Paul apparently had no conscience against it. He could send Onesimus back to his master with a lovely letter full of sympathy for the slave's lot, yet never hinting that slavery was wrong. The vast implications of Christ's saving work had not then been so far unfolded. It may be said also that, however much horror St Paul had felt at the system, he could not have shaken it, and an attempt to do so would have caused delay and perhaps destruction to that preaching of the Great Emancipation which must lead to all lesser kind of freedom.

Slavery was, of course, bound to vanish; it must die ultimately where Christianity prevails. It died hard even in our own Christian empire. But when St Paul wrote it was a comforting and stimulating thought to him that the Christian bond-servant was the Lord's freed-man. Besides, he goes on to remind the Corinthian master, who was a Christian, of this other fact, that even a free man is Christ's bond-servant.

Now this thought is a constantly recurring one with the Apostle. Borrowed from the usage of the Greek slave world, it was caught up by him and made the basis of one of his profoundest contemplations about the Christ. Deissmann, in his fascinating book *Light from the Ancient East*, gives an account of the inscriptions found on the wall of the Temple at Delphi which shows the nature and ritual of the slave's redemption in ancient times. One of the ways in which a slave might become free was by the slow and painful accumulation of money to purchase his freedom. When the amount was sufficient, it was paid by the slave into the treasury of the temple of a heathen god, as the price of his ransom. Then he and his master repaired together to the temple, and the priest, in the name of the god, paid the price over to the master. Thus the master was considered to have sold his slave to the god. He received full payment for him, and gave him his discharge. Now, the slave belonged no more to his master, but was the property of the god. He had changed owners, and gained freedom by the change.

¶ I would point out that St Paul, in expanding and adapting to the Greek world the Master's old saying about ransom, was admirably meeting the requirements and the intellectual capacity of the lower classes. For the poor saints of Corinth, among whom there were certainly some slaves, he could not have found a more popular illustration of the past and present work of the Lord. A Christian slave of Corinth going up the path to the Acrocorinthus about Eastertide, when St Paul's letter arrived, would see towards the north-west the snowy peak of Parnassus rising clearer and clearer before him, and everyone knew that within the circuit of that commanding summit lay the shrines at which Apollo or Serapis or Asclepius the Healer *bought slaves with a price, for freedom.* Then in the evening assembly was read the letter lately received from Ephesus, and straightway the new Healer was present in spirit with

[1] J. C. Ryle.

His worshippers, giving them freedom from another slavery, *redeeming with a price* the bondmen of sin and the law—and that price no pious fiction, first received by Him out of the hard-earned denarii of the slave, but paid by Himself.[1]

The slave went back to his daily drudgery and degradation, but he found in this gospel message of the Cross rest amidst all his labour, and comfort even amid the oft-time cruel usage. What other service can gall him now? He already belongs to the true and living God.

Here, then, is a great light upon all spiritual freedom and its conditions. We have been thinking of temporal bondage, but let us consider now that there is a spiritual slavery and examine some of the main principles which are to guide the action of the slave of sin who longs for freedom.

1. First of all, then, *his freedom is gained not by payments of his own, but by the purchase-money of Christ.* This is a great contrast, for in reality the slave bought his freedom by his own hard earnings. It was only a pious fiction that the god bought him: he had really bought himself. But Jesus Christ's purchase is not fiction, it is a glorious fact. We read of it again and again in our New Testament. He spoke of it before His death. 'The Son of man is come to give his life a ransom for many.' Not only, then, is our past so dealt with that our former debts are for ever blotted out, but our present is gloriously provided for, so that we need no longer go hither and thither at the bidding of Satan; we need never bend submissively to the voice of temptation, even when it comes with authority. The slave had acted so long at the bidding of his master that if he met his former owner in the street, and received a command, the first instinct of the man's heart would be to obey, and to think of the lash which would inevitably fall upon him if he failed. Then his second thought would be, 'I have been bought out of this man's service, and I need no longer do as I am told. I am bought by the god, and my service is sacred to him.' This is precisely true of us. The first suggestion to sin often finds us willing to yield, simply from habit. Then this second thought flashes out like a lighthouse in the night, 'I am not my own, I must be loyal to God, who paid the price for me.'

[1] A Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 332.

2. There is another suggestive parallel in the process of emancipation. *The freedom of the slave was not considered complete without sacrifice.* Within or in front of the temple stood the altar. There the master and the servant and the priest stood while the sacrifice was offered, in token that the transference of ownership was real and effective. This is true as to our spiritual emancipation. For ourselves as for St Paul, the Incarnation, wondrous as it is, would have been woefully incomplete without the work of the Atonement. If Jesus Christ had simply become man for us, we should have had before our eyes the pattern of what our humanity might do in fulfilment of God's law, but we should have been without means of fulfilling the example. And so we have this note, which rings out again and again in the New Testament, 'Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us' (1 Cor. v. 7). This message was meant not only for a handful of folk in Judæa, not only for the circle gathered immediately around Calvary. As Dr A. W. Robinson says, 'The Cross speaks in every language because it speaks in none: it says this, that there is no sacrifice which God has not made for man.'

¶ Many years ago I wandered into a little Breton Cathedral, and found a side-chapel which was bare and empty. It had no altar and no priest: but carved on the stone wall hung a Figure of the Crucified, and underneath was written, *C'est ainsi qu'il m'a aimé*, 'He loved me like this.'[1]

3. We find a third instructive point also. *The slave's freedom was usually attested by witnesses, and was then frequently inscribed upon stone.* So in the New Testament we find frequent allusions to the attestation of our freedom. In the eighth chapter to the Romans, St Paul, speaking of deliverance from the spirit of bondage, continues: 'The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God' (ver. 16). There is Divine attestation in regard to ourselves that we are now bought by God and belong to Him. And it is a testimony written down like the old imperial inscriptions. 'Rejoice,' says Christ, 'that your names stand inscribed in the heavens' (Luke x. 20), as He tells of the great emancipation which makes His followers trample Satan's power beneath their feet. True message of the gospel for

[1] T. H. Darlow, *The Love of God*, 12.

every slave in Corinth, true witness ringing down all the centuries for every one in bondage to sin to-day. 'The Lord's freedman, Christ's bondservant.' There is a striking phrase in the old Collect: 'Whose service is perfect freedom.' In the Latin it runs: 'To be His slave is to be a king.' As George Matheson has beautifully sung of Christ's invitation—

Put on My fetters and thou shalt be free;
Embrace My altar and thy cords shall fall;
Become love's captive, and thy soul shall be
Lord of itself and master over all.

Compensation for Circumstances

1 Cor. vii. 22.—'For he that was called in the Lord, being a bondservant, is the Lord's freedman: likewise he that was called, being free, is Christ's bondservant.' (R.V.)

This is a paradoxical saying which asserts that a man can be a slave yet not a slave, free and yet not free at the same moment. It does not mean, however, that St Paul is losing his grip of reality, but that he is dwelling on the way in which appearances can contradict reality. Circumstances seldom tell the whole truth about people. 'It is not the cowl that makes the monk,' nor the black coat that betokens the gentleman, nor the chain that proves the slave. Think of that scene in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* where Uncle Tom, driven to the wall, with the whip waiting for his naked body, and brutality ready to crush him, answers his cruel and brutal master who says to him, 'How would you like to be tied to a tree and have a slow fire lit up 'round you?' 'Mas'r,' said Tom, 'I know you can do dreadful things, but after you've killed the body there ain't any more ye can do. And, oh, there's all eternity to come after that.'[1]

Who was the slave there? Was it the old negro who could rise above circumstances and keep his soul free, or the white tyrant in bondage to his own rage? The text suggests a contrast something like that. It tells us that circumstances have a certain importance, but are very far from being all-important. They do not decide that a man shall be good or that he shall be happy: those things depend at last upon the man inside the circumstances. Our subject is the true and rich compensation which all may find in the inward life for the shortcomings and mistreatment of circumstances.

1. The Apostle's teaching contains two steps.

(1) *Let every man accept his lot.* After all, the great circumstances of life are there by God's permission. They may be His will: perhaps there is a purpose in them. At any rate this may be said, that where God's call has found a man, God's grace can keep him. That is the great conservative principle in the life of faith—open to modification, of course, and not to be too rigidly applied, but more wise and wholesome than hasty folk know. 'Do not be in a hurry to change your state,' says St Paul, and he applies the doctrine to several matters. Creed is one, and here the counsel has great value. One of the letters in Charles Kingsley's biography was written to a lady who felt that it might be her duty to join the Church of Rome, and the Canon's argument ran closely upon these lines, that, as grace had come to her first through the Church of England, there was a presumption that God had further gifts to give her through the same channel. Another, and the hardest application of all, was in the case of the slave, yet St Paul plainly said that even if the bondman saw his way to freedom, he must not seize it hastily as though it were the one thing needful.

(2) *Look for the compensations.* There are compensations even for the slave. He is branded on the body, but his spirit may be free. A chain may bind his limbs, but there need be no chain upon his heart. The Word of God is not bound. Knowing Christ, the bondman may be always doing the Lord's work, tasting the cup of salvation, rejoicing in love, looking for the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled. And beside these high privileges, do circumstances matter so very much after all? Does it not come true that there is neither bond nor free in Christ Jesus? For those who really see Him there is a glory in the Saviour which dazzles their weak eyes so that they cannot closely observe time's disadvantages, and a sweetness in His love which overpowers many a passing bitterness. The saint will often be too thankful to complain.

2. Let us apply this teaching to cover our circumstances.

Slavery is gone, but bondage remains in many

[1] H. T. Kerr, *The Gospel in Modern Poetry*, 142.

forms. There is the bondage of comparative poverty—perhaps a sorer trial than absolute poverty. We meet no sterner taskmaster and no more fretting discipline than financial difficulty on a small scale. The workman's wife who must maintain the home and keep love at the fireside on thirty shillings each week, and the single-handed tradesman who knows that a two-months' illness would put him in bankruptcy—the tears of angels fall on their bonds. There is the slavery of labour. The daily task waits for a man. It never considers his feelings. Ill or well he must return to it, whether the bitter winter dawn snaps at him, or the summer morning smiles an invitation. There is the bondage of physical weakness. In an old character sketch of a great statesman, Mr Stead said about him something to this effect: 'With all his vast ability he reveals a delicacy of constitution which will, perhaps, for ever prevent him from taking a place among the historic prime-ministers of England.' What real pain lies in such limitations! It would seem that many men have paths of the heart's desire which they would dearly love to tread, yet the hand of circumstance has written up there 'No road,' and they must turn aside and walk in less interesting ways.

What shall we say to these things? 'Be resigned?' Yes, truly, that is needful; but let us not stop there. A larger counsel is given us. Be not over-anxious about outward freedom. There is a sweetness of heart that can never be lost, save by repining thought. The circumstances do not matter so much. Look for the compensations. Dwell on the affirmatives of life, not on its negatives; on its permissions, not on its prohibitions; on what you can do, not on what you cannot do.

¶ James Smetham struggled all his life for a competency in his work as an artist. In one of his letters he refers to 'the hope he has in getting enough work to give fortifications to his resources.' And, in another letter, he replies to a friend who had suggested that, being an artist, he should visit the Continent for a holiday: 'I suppose I ought to wish with you to go to Rome and Venice, and that it is the duty of painters to go there when they can seems pretty clear. But really, I feel so very happy among our English hedgerows, and find such inexhaustible and transcendent delight in the English flowers, and birds, and trees, and hills and brooks, and, above all, in the wondrous sweet English faces and charming English ways, that nothing but a sense of duty will ever drive me to Rome and Venice. My difficulty is to appreciate our little back garden, our copper-beech, our weeping-ash, our little nailed-up rose trees, and twisting, yellow creepers. The vale of Hornsey seems a vast "foreign parts" to me—a happy valley—into which I get a glimpse in six weeks or so—a valley of wonders.'

Some may say even with bitterness, 'Ah, it's easy talking.' Is it? Was it easy for St Paul? True, he had never worn a chain when he wrote these words, but he came to wear it later, and the chain made no difference. It is not easy for honest men to talk as though circumstances mattered little, nor for good men to feel that they do, for indeed that independence of spirit is life's hardest lesson and the learning of it a triumph of grace. This subject lies not on the fringe of religion but at its very centre. There is no more searching test of character than our relation to circumstances. If we are easily cast down or uplifted by them, 'the world is too much with us': we are of those who 'mind earthly things.' But only the man who sets his affections on things above, where Christ sitteth, can treat outward ills as they deserve.

¶ For Christian high-mindedness amid weighty trials compare this sentence from Bradford's *History of the Puritan Fathers*. After describing their perils and conflicts by sea and in the wilderness of New England, the writer adds in his quaint spelling—'They knew they were pilgrimes and looked not much on these things, but lift up their eyes unto the heavens, their dearest countrie, and quieted their spirits.'

3. How can this serenity be gained?

The other side of the text offers guidance. 'He that was called, being free, is Christ's bondservant.' That applies as widely as the first, for if everybody tastes bondage in some respects, everybody has liberty in other parts of life. Few men indeed are slaves all round. The poor man is often rich in health, and the hard worker frequently enjoys a certain independence. Then the rule is—where you are most free 'use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh,' but count yourselves the slaves of Jesus Christ. Let not assured health promote

self-confidence, and if you have riches hold them with a loose hand, and if you have leisure tremble for your use of it. The whole secret of spirituality lies near this point. There are those who depend utterly on outward conditions and find their temper and their usefulness decided by the irritations and the comforts of the day; and there are others whose whole life is dictated by an authority which resides in the depths of their being. 'Genius,' said John Foster, 'is that which can kindle its own fire': All who hold to Christ may be geniuses in the life of faith, and that possibility is made an accomplished fact by one plain and only method—by taking up the Cross. Nothing else will make the strong and heavenly temper. He who values the pleasant things of life lightly for Christ's sake will find that Christ enables him to hold its harder circumstances very lightly when they come. He who willingly serves the Eternal shall never be the slave of the transient.

Calling and Character

1 Cor. vii. 24.—'Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.'

1. The peculiar action of a man's calling upon his character is a subject worthy of consideration. We are satisfied that our surroundings do not necessarily determine our character, as environment directly and indirectly determines the hues of the chameleon or the colour of the bird; but it is impossible to ignore the fact that the vocations we pursue really affect our deeper life. Each department of human duty has its own atmosphere, its own climate, and exercises a definite influence upon the thought and character of those who breathe and act within it.

(1) *Professional life* has its own traditions, associations, and influences which are sometimes felt to be trying to Christian principle and dangerous to Christian character. A lawyer, for example, finds his peculiar line of temptation in the tendency to treat lightly, in the interests of his client, the exact claims of truth.

¶ In the letters of the distinguished French advocate Frédéric Ozanam a passage occurs which reveals the perplexities that the legal profession brings to a genuine Christian man. After speaking of 'this worthy profession of advocate,' he proceeds: 'And yet I will confess to you that these so rare preoccupations weigh upon me. I cannot acclimatize myself in the atmosphere of chicanery. There is no cause so good that there are not reciprocal wrongs; there is no plea so loyal that some weak points must not be hidden. There exist habits of hyperbole and reticence of which the most respectable members of the bar give the example, and to which one must submit oneself; all the figures of rhetoric are reduced into action before the tribunals which only understand this language. It is agreed that one must ask two hundred francs damages when one desires fifty, that the client cannot fail to be right in all his allegations, and that the adversary is a fool. Explain yourself in terms more reasonable, you pass for having made concessions, you have avowed yourself vanquished, your colleagues reproach you with it, your client pretends himself betrayed; and if you meet in the world one of the judges who sat in the affair, he will accost you with saying, "My dear fellow, you are too timid."'[1]

In medicine, the specific temptation is largely involved in the confidential relations which of necessity exist between physician and patient. The artist also works in a realm which tests his sincerity by fierce and peculiar ordeals. Taken as a whole, the heroes, the literature, and the legends of the art world are not too friendly to high moral ideals; the comradeship and associations of the calling are not encouraging to an artist with the highest aspirations, and a thousand pathetic stories relate the bitter financial struggles of painters and sculptors who were loyal to their sense of truth and beauty. So has the literary man and the scientist sorrows of the soul arising out of their special callings, sorrows with which a stranger may not intermeddle.

(2) *Commercial life* has its own forms of temptation. Whether the commercial man is a great speculator or a small trader does not much matter; the process of money-making has a tendency to banish great thoughts and fine feelings. The narrowing lust of gold threatens all who seek it. Temptation and peril which are comparatively faint and distant to the great mass of professional men immedi-

[1] W. L. Watkinson.

ately threaten those whose constant thought is how to buy and sell and get gain.

¶ Grenfell of Labrador became so dismayed, at one point, with the poverty and recurring diseases of both children and adults that he felt he must go into the grocery business, as he put it. 'When at length we actually preached co-operation, and started a cash co-operative store, we at once became anathema; and when later we started such a venture four miles from a trader's station, he, an ex-politician, set wheels in motion not only in the press, but in political circles, and a commission was sent down purporting to enquire into our activities, but really with a view to disclosing our economic turpitude.

'Personally, I never felt that the Sermon on the Mount, or the healing of the blind and lepers, brought Christ to the Cross. It followed so closely after His actual interference with the money-changers, that I have no doubt but that the devil of greed for gain which still ruins so many of our men in power, had much to do with His enemies coming out into the open. That devil is not dead yet, not by a long way!'[1]

(3) *Manual labour* also has its dangers. Without question the rough work of life may easily induce coarseness of soul. What a vast amount of severe, unclean, unhealthy, depressing work has to be done in a great city! To a large extent the unpleasing, disagreeable, and, in one sense, debasing toil is screened from the eye of the delicate citizen, but it is work that must be done; and as much of it is noxious to the body of the toiler, we can hardly doubt that it impairs the health of his higher nature. The temptations of the working classes are altogether different from those of professional men, from those of the Stock Exchange, from the besetments of the barracks and ocean; yet they as certainly exist, and, if not resisted, develop the brute life at the expense of the integrity, delicacy, and beauty of the spirit.

(4) *The ecclesiastical life* has its distinct and subtle snares. The tendency to fancy that we have great virtues and experiences because the language which expresses them is so often on our lips, the deadening effect of familiarity with sacred things, the temptation to believe that we possess the essential grace because we have the forms and vessels ordained for its communication—these and many more are perils of a life spent in the sanctuary.

[1] *What Christ Means to Me*, 72.

¶ 'Hold,' cried Malan to old Rabbi Duncan, and the words ran through him like a shock of electricity; 'hold, you have got the Word of God in your mouth.' And so have we: the *Word of God*, and yet how easily, how impudently, we too often handle it, passing our light opinions on it, chattering round about it, until we fill in our time, not really studying it, or using it, but rather making it a peg on which we hang our own poor shallow notions!'[1]

¶ A man may live in mountain-country, and lose all sense of the heights. And that is a terrible impoverishment, when mountain-country comes to have the ordinary significance of the plains. That is the peril of the preacher. We may talk about the mountains, and we may do it as blind, insensitive children of the plains. The plentifulness of our privileges may make us numb. 'Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon?' The calamity is that we may do so and never know it.[2]

2. Yet the grace of God can keep us in every legitimate calling, and the very difficulties belonging to any special vocation may give character a singular lustre. Sir Matthew Hale and many other illustrious names prove that the legal life permits and fosters the noblest character. The Church boasts a constellation of surgeons and physicians who have done honour to human nature. James Smetham proves that a career of passionate art aspiration may be blended with an earnest spiritual life. Jenny Lind and Antoinette Sterling show that the public singer may walk in white raiment. Multitudes of commercial men are spiritual men also. Captain Hedley Vicars and a great host beside have at once been soldiers of Cæsar and of Christ. We have no right to expect the grace of God to make us invulnerable to the deteriorating influences of an illegitimate calling; but we may be confident that there is special grace for every honest situation—grace that will save to the uttermost converting the threatening peril into a source of special excellency.

Of course we are at liberty to change our vocation if circumstances permit; yet it will be well not to cherish great expectations from such

[1] A. J. Gossip, *In Christ's Stead*, 58.
[2] J. H. Jowett.

changes. We usually discover that we have simply forsaken one furnace for another. Says the Apostle, 'Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.' Here the Apostle did not contemplate the precise matter we are considering, but substantially he did. In so many words he says: The station, the condition, the task is little; greatly endeavour to glorify God in it, whatever it may be. Generally little is gained spiritually by exchanging position and work. Let us not fret ourselves on account of our calling and environment. The main thing is to discern the possibilities of our lot, and through patience, watchfulness, and prayer to get out of it whatever it can give of knowledge, strength, and blessing. The new Testament exhibits the saint in very different situations and callings. Tentmakers, sailors, soldiers, artisans, lawyers, physicians, tanners, carpenters, statesmen, household servants, fishermen, sellers of purple, agriculturists—devout men and women have adorned all possible positions and glorified God by learning the special lessons of His grace and providence.

¶ I am for permanence in all things, at the earliest possible moment, and to the latest possible. Blessed is he that continueth where he is. Here let us rest, and lay out seedfields; here let us learn to dwell. O unwise mortals that forever change and shift, and say, Yonder, not Here! Wealth richer than both the Indies lies everywhere for man, if he will endure. Not his oaks only and his fruit-trees, his very heart roots itself wherein he will abide.[1]

> He who wanders widest lifts
> No more of beauty's jealous veils
> Than he who from his doorway sees
> The miracle of flowers and trees.[2]

Immortality as a Motive

1 Cor. vii. 29-31.—'But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.'

When St Paul wrote these words he thought that the end of the world, as we know it, was close at hand. He saw Time like a great ship on the ocean, with all its sails close-reefed, about to stop, its long adventurous voyage over. The Jesus whom he had not known in His life on earth, in the details of whose life he took much less interest than we do—the Jesus of history, who had become the Christ of the wonderful new faith—was about to descend from heaven and inaugurate on earth that transcendental Kingdom of God which would be a complete transformation of the world of our experience. The conviction that the end was near, that the time was shortened and shortening, was universal in the early Christian Church. Only the event, the delay and disappointment, put this conviction out of the general and apostolic mind.

Let us look, first, at the principle on which St Paul bases his counsel; and then at its application.

1. The principle is not one that we find in this passage only. We can trace its working in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. The people at Thessalonica took this teaching of the Second Advent, and the nearness of that event, with almost delirious joy. So far did they carry their confidence that some gave up work on the strength of it. Concerning these people St Paul writes very sternly, and tells them with scorn that, if any man will not work, however pious his motive, neither shall he eat.

The same spirit underlies these verses. The Corinthians are not to allow their sense of the shortness of time to stop any part of their proper life and activities. They are to mingle with their fellows; they are to love, to marry, and be given in marriage; they are to expect the old familiar joys and sorrows; they are to enter into business, and to use all the varied round of the present system of things. The framework of their life is to be just the same as that of those who expect the world to last for ever. But it is only the framework. When we look closer, we see that St Paul would have them use the sense of the shortness of time in a very pregnant way indeed. They are to go on with their own life certainly, but he would have them live that life in the light of the 'white radiance of eternity.'

Now, the results of this are manifold. Immortality as a motive, when allowed full play, must have an almost boundless effect. To feel time is short puts hurry into life; when the

[1] Carlyle, *Past and Present.* [2] Whittier.

fact is taken in its un-Christian incompleteness, it fevers the blood, and we become the driven victims of haste and imperfection. To know eternity is long gives calm, leisure, dignity, and strength. The tyranny of the moment is broken. If a man looks simply at the shortness of time, he naturally comes to say, Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. The ordinary view spurs one on to pleasure; St Paul's view gives the springs of holiness.

2. Let us turn to St Paul's application of this principle.

(1) 'They that have wives as though they had none.' What does he mean? Going at once to the heart of the matter, St Paul's meaning is this—Bring eternity into your homes; or, in other words, in all the relations of your family life assimilate the facts of your immortality.

Somebody has said—Beware of the love that loves you, it will either be your heaven or your hell. And most people learn that love is inseparable from pain, where we learn all the deepest truths—at home. We let the irritations of the moment, the difficulties of the day, the frets of small disappointments, kindle our tongues, or breed sourness and strife. It is usually nothing very serious that produces these things. When the great sorrow comes, *it* does not divide us. For the most part, we get through our calamities with small mischief to our hearts. But the gadflies of life, who among us has got from under their stings without serious loss?

We have not reached, as we may, the altitude of the eternities. We do not allow the thought of our immortality, and the high calling wherewith we are called so to possess us that we can put aside as trivial the passing chills and the incidental difficulties that are bound to arise when two people, however saintly, come to practise the high art of living together. It may seem almost ludicrous to quote eternity and immortality against a crying child, a late breakfast, or a short temper. But it is just the smallest duties that need behind them the greatest principles.

Some day of days! Some dawning yet to be
I shall be clothed with immortality!

And, in that day, I shall not greatly care
That Jane spilt candle grease upon the stair.
It will not grieve me then, as once it did,
That careless hands have chipped my teapot lid.

I groan, being burdened. But, in that glad day,
I shall forget vexations of the way.

That needs were often great, when means were small,
Will not perplex me any more at all.

A few short years at most (it may be less),
I shall have done with earthly storm and stress.

So, for this day, I lay me at Thy feet,
O, keep me sweet, my Master! Keep me sweet![1]

(2) 'And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not.' What does that mean? Well, of course, it does not mean that the Apostle is opposed to all emotion, or that he would have us repress our hearts. St Paul is no Stoic. As Dean Swift puts it, he does not believe in cutting off your feet because you occasionally want a pair of shoes. The Apostle's teaching is that the risings of our emotion, of whatever kind, are not to throw us off our balance. However the surface rolls, deep down among the central places there must be calm.

Now, what so calculated to produce this calm, this balance, this serenity, amid all the clash of adversity or prosperity, as a profound sense of the illimitable being to which we are heirs? After all, what does it matter whether we are rich or poor for the little time we are at this stage? Poverty! It is a dark shadow, and there are many beautiful things that do not thrive under its blight. But at that day no man will be sorry he was not rich. The responsibilities of wealth are enormous, and its temptations are subtle and searching. It is not without meaning that we are told by one Evangelist that Christ said, Blessed are the poor.

If we have to stand by many open graves, though it may be hard, really, is it a thing to mourn about over much? Our graves have never yet been consecrated as they should be, and death remains dread and awful, the last to be transfigured by our faith. But if Jesus died and rose again, reading the mystery with eyes that have looked into His open grave and

[1] Fay Inchfawn, *The Verse-Book of a Homely Woman.*

with hearts to which He speaks now, death is but an incident in an endless career.

¶ Some time before his death Bishop Watts-Ditchfield drew up the service to be used at his funeral. The first hymn chosen was an Easter one striking the glad note of triumphant joy which is the Christian's reply to the challenge of death.

> Jesus lives! no longer now
> Can thy terrors, death, appal us;
> Jesus lives! by this we know
> Thou, O grave, canst not enthral us.
> Alleluia!

The whole service was one of thanksgiving and hope, not of sadness and gloom; for was not 'death but the gate of life immortal.'[1]

(3) 'And they that buy, as though they possessed not.' In these words St Paul reaches out to the world of business.

It is a common enough moan that the difficulties in commercial life were never so many, and the strain and rush so great as at the present time. Read the old memoirs, and you find the same familiar moan, three hundred years ago. And no doubt in that far-off place to which this letter of St Paul's was sent the business men of those early times made the same plea, and thought that it excused much. But when we have made due allowance, it still remains a serious question how a man is to keep himself unspotted in the hurry and bustle of modern markets. Is it possible to solve the many and intricate and perplexing problems that meet us at every turn? Well, let us remember that the fashion of this world passeth away, that very soon there will be no markets and shops and customers any more, nothing but the issues of an endless life. But the strife for riches, how shall a man keep pure through all that? That snare is not so easily broken. But broken it may be, if a man has moral earnestness, and looks forward with the long look which is his peculiar privilege and glory. Many very puzzling questions answer themselves, with a decisiveness that allows no subterfuge, when taken up in that fierce light. Take eternity into your business, and it will keep both you and the business clean.

And then St Paul, having touched upon the home and the heart and the business, sums up all in one great saying, and gathers every other fragment of life under the searching of this great light in these pregnant words, 'And they that use the world as not abusing it.'

[1] Ellis N. Gowing, *John Edwin Watts-Ditchfield*, 299.

Using the World

1 Cor. vii. 31.—'And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.'

A PARADOX is a recognized means of conveying important truths. The Bible contains many, and we seem to have one in the attitude of the Christian to material things. On the one hand we read, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world'; and yet also, 'Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,' and the still more striking passage, 'The living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.'

Christians in all ages have felt the difficulty, and have often gone to one extreme or the other in meeting it. Many would pronounce Christianity to be a wholly ascetic religion and would contrast it in this respect with Paganism. By such, the religion of Christ would be summed up in the one word 'self-denial,' the religion of Ancient Greece by 'self-realization.'

A study of Church history, however, as well as of the Bible, will suggest a doubt as to whether asceticism is wholly in accord with Christianity, and whether everything non-ascetic is to be resisted as worldly. We remember that it was John the Baptist who was the Apostle of asceticism. But Jesus Christ is our example, and He came 'eating and drinking.' At Cana He sanctified all natural affection, all innocent recreation. He taught us the same truth by action as St Paul by word, 'Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God, and prayer.'

¶ Too often it has been the Baptist's mind, not Christ's, that has prevailed within the Church and animated it. It has at times looked frowningly at art, has been afraid of music, has belittled many things, has emptied life of much that it is meant to have. 'Don't coop your soul in a corner,' Santa Teresa advised; yet too many have done it, have shrunk back out of this and that, nursing a rather delicate and 'cloistered virtue' that is fearful of dust and

heat, afraid of the pushing and the jostle of the real rough workaday world.[1]

1. The problem of harmonizing the spiritual and the material has to be faced in all ages and all places. When a boy begins his life at a university, for instance, he has to face many things which are not evil, but which seem to have little or no connection with religion. At school his studies were often regarded as a mere mental discipline, to be gone through because he was compelled and not because he was interested in them. At the university for the first time he is free. The element of choice and of attraction becomes far more pronounced. He has to consider how far it is right to give time, interest, and affection to certain studies.

Fifty years ago the antagonism of science and religion was so great that it seemed impossible to believe in both. Now it is almost foreign to our thinking. The theologian gladly recognizes the debt of the Christian Church to the scientist, who has so greatly enlarged his conception of the universe. The scientist gladly recognizes that there are many true things in the world which science will never be able to account for. It is much easier than it used to be to believe that the God of Nature is the God of the Bible. 'The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.' The Christian who comes to Nature will soon find 'tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything.' The scientist who comes back to the Bible will be all the better able to understand the great poems of the Old Testament, and the teaching of Him who said, 'Consider the ravens,' 'Consider the lilies of the field.' The last half century has wonderfully vindicated the importance of science in the study of the Bible, the importance of religion in the study of Nature.

But if Science has its difficulties for the Christian student, Art has more. How many people have been blind for years to beauty and have suddenly been enlightened! A chapter in Ruskin perhaps has inspired them, and soon the beauty of Nature, of Architecture, of Painting, and of Music, has been almost an intoxication. There have been those who have almost lost their balance and who have thought that they must choose between Art and Religion. Further reflection has shown that the two may be harmonized.

[1] A. J. Gossip, *The Galilean Accent*, 70.

¶ In the Life of Sir E. Burne-Jones there is an account by his wife of the effect first made upon her by coming into contact with him and his artist friends, Morris and Rossetti. She says, 'I wish it were possible to explain the impression made upon me as a young girl, whose experience so far had been quite remote from art, by sudden and close intercourse with those to whom it was the breath of life. The only approach I can make to describing it is by saying that I felt in the presence of a new religion. Their love of beauty did not seem to me unbalanced, but as if it included the whole world and raised the point from which they regarded everything. Human beauty especially was in a way sacred to them, I thought; and a young lady who was much with them, and sat for them as a model, said to me, "It was being in a new world to be with them. I sat to them and I was there with them. And I was a holy thing to them—I was a holy thing to them."'

But if it is lawful to study these things, to give up a great part of life to them, to love them with an intense affection, in what does a Christian differ from the highest form of pagan, who did all this and, at the same time, tried to subdue the evil in his nature? The answer is to be found in the text, 'they that use this world, as not abusing it,' or, as the margin of the Revised Version has it, 'those that use the world, as not using it to the full.'

But surely it is extraordinarily difficult to treat the things of this world as both right and wrong, to love them and not to love them, to study them and yet to regard them as vanity. It is possible only if there is a higher interest, a greater affection always present. Our Lord said, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.'

There is a lesson for the Christian here. Which comes first in our lives, our religion or our studies and our amusements? Let us ask ourselves the question, if we had to give up our spiritual or our intellectual interests which would it be? If we have truly to say the spiritual, then we cannot be Christians.

¶ Be assured that if ever any other motive becomes a leading one in your mind, as the principal one for exertion, except your love of

art, that moment it is all over with your art. I do not say that you are not to desire money, nor to desire fame, nor to desire position; you cannot but desire all three; nay, you may—if you are willing that I should use the word Love in a desecrated sense—love all three; that is, passionately covet them; yet you must not covet or love them in the first place. Men of strong passions and imaginations must always care a great deal for anything they care for at all; but the whole question is one of first or second.[1]

2. To induce the belief that religion is the greatest thing in the world, the same arguments have been used in all ages—the uncertainty of life, the shortness of time compared with eternity, the importance of being ready when our own call shall come. To induce love to God, the only way is to think of His love to us. 'God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.' 'We love him because he first loved us.' After dwelling on such things, everything else seems of little account. We need not be surprised at the exaggeration of those who seem to think that the soul is everything; as for example the thoroughness of St Francis of Assisi in his renunciation of earthly possessions. In the great Irish Revival of 1859 and in the Welsh Revival of recent years crowds of people gave themselves wholly to spiritual things and neglected the body and the mind almost entirely. Exaggerations such as these have enormously influenced the history of the Christian Church, but they are not the whole truth and they can never be normal. True religion must be a thing for all times and circumstances. The man who has gone through a great spiritual experience may have a nervous breakdown and may be compelled to attend to his body and his mind. He may find himself studying the flowers in the Riviera, or the temples in Upper Egypt, or he may be skating and tobogganing in Switzerland. This does not mean that his spiritual force is abated, but that he no longer takes a one-sided view of life. The body and the mind must be attended to, or the whole man will suffer.

But most of us are in little danger of going to such an extreme. Our temptation is in the opposite direction. There is such a multiplication of interests in modern life that the highest thing of all is apt to be crowded out. Now perhaps more than ever 'the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things . . . choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.' Spiritual atrophy is probably the most frequent cause of the death of the soul. As children we feel the need of communion with our Heavenly Father, but we have perhaps schooled ourselves to do without it, and now the very desire for it may have disappeared. One day without prayer wounds the soul. We should all admit that the great saints have always been men of prayer; but great men of action in worldly things who have also been great Christians have been the same. It is said of the first Earl Cairns that he spent a long time in prayer before every Cabinet Council and that his colleagues recognized the calmness and wisdom which he always displayed. To be a statesman, or a soldier, or a business man, or a student, and at the same time a Christian, has been an ideal very often reached.

Those who are rich in this world—rich in money, or health, or learning—may be called upon to sacrifice their riches like the young ruler in the Gospel, but the normal advice is that given by St Paul, in the first Epistle to Timothy, when the Church was settling down to its ordinary life: 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.' Such a life is in some respects more difficult than a life of complete renunciation. To give up everything, difficult though it is, brings a certain satisfaction, and makes spirituality easier. But to go through the daily round and the common task and yet to bring every thought into subjection to Christ may be more difficult. God calls some of us to one life and some to the other. Are we called to preach the gospel to the heathen, to visit in the slums of a great town, to translate the Bible into a foreign tongue? let us make full proof of our ministry. But we may be called to live at home, to bring up children, to order domestics, to sit on Boards and Committees, and the Christian life can be lived there also.

[1] Ruskin.

Happy-Heartedness

1 Cor. vii. 32.—'I would have you without carefulness.'
Ps. lv. 22.—'Cast thy burden upon the Lord.'

THERE are few graces which the world admires so much as the grace of happy-heartedness. There is a certain perennial attraction in men and women who bear their burdens well. When we see a face all lined with care it often touches the chord of pity in us. We are moved to compassion when it flashes on us what a story is engraven there. But the face that really helps us on our journey is seldom the face of battle and of agony; it is the face which has its sunshine still.

¶ A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note. He or she is a radiating focus of goodwill, and their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted. We need not care whether they could prove the forty-seventh proposition or no. They do a better thing than that: they practically demonstrate the liveableness of life.[1]

That is one of the great charms of children. They are possessors of this sunny attribute. That is one reason why the presence of children is such a perpetual solace and refreshing. Children are far from being little angels, as every father and every mother knows. They can be cruel, and intensely selfish, and amazingly and unblushingly untruthful. Yet, when the worst is said of them that can be said, there yet remains in them this touch of heaven which is a greater blessing to the world than all the wonders of wireless telegraphy.

We must distinguish happy-heartedness from that poor counterfeit we call frivolity. A child may be absolutely irresponsible, but a child is never really frivolous. No one is so swiftly touched to wonder. No one is so deeply moved with awe. When our children laugh at what to us is sacred, it simply means that they do not understand. The things that are wonderful and great in their eyes are not at all what we consider so, and we never find them mocking at what is wonderful and great to them. Now that is the very hall-mark of frivolity. It recognizes what is great, and jests at it. It is not an intellectual inability; it is much more truly a moral inability. The great instance of frivolity in Scripture is that of the men who refused the invitation. They were by no means intellectual fools, these men. They could do a bit of work and do it admirably. But when this moment came they all made light of it—they took it as a jest though it was kingly—they lost the opportunity of their lives because of their old habit of belittling.

¶ 'The Queen,' writes Morley,[1] 'was assuredly not a misanthrope, yet she said once a deep and strange thing to an Archbishop. "As I get older," she said, "I cannot understand the world. I cannot comprehend its littleness. When I look at its frivolities and littlenesses it seems to me as if people were all a little mad."'

Different by all the world from that is the sweet genius of happy-heartedness. It is as swift to recognize the best as is frivolity to laugh at it. Indeed frivolous people are commonly unhappy, and are very often trying to forget something which is akin to tragedy.

Now we are all apt to think that this happy-heartedness is temperamental. We are apt to think it is just born with people, and of course in a measure that is true. There *are* Mark Tapleys in the world, and men like Burton of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*. And we might go further and say that it is not only temperamental but racial. The Irish have it and the Scots have not; and the southern peoples and not the northern peoples; and the Kaffir boy out in South Africa will go singing and laughing over his work all day, while his Dutch master will have a face as long as his own prayers.

But notice this. The Bible frequently classes with virtues to be won what we have reckoned to be gifts of Nature. Think of courage—do not we regard that as a gift? Do we not know that certain men are born courageous? It is not every boy who could say what Nelson said: 'Fear, mother—what is fear? I never saw it.' And yet this courage, which with perfect justice we are in the way of regarding as temperamental, is viewed in Scripture as something to be won. Take joy. Are we the masters of our joy? Is not the capacity for joy inherent? Are there not those who gravitate to joy as there are others who gravitate to gloom? And yet our Saviour says to His disciples, 'These things have I spoken to you, that in me ye

[1] R. L. Stevenson.

[1] *The Life of Queen Victoria.*

might have joy.' And the fruit of the spirit is love and joy and peace.

So it is with happy-heartedness. In the eyes of God and in the light of Scripture it is a shining virtue to be won. Happy-heartedness is possible for all and the unfailing secret of it lies in the casting of the burden on the Lord. It does not matter what the burden be. Burdens are just as various as blessings. Many of the heaviest burdens men can bear have to be borne where eyes can never pierce. Many of the heaviest burdens men can bear fall on them through the relationships of life. It matters not. There can be no exceptions in the magnificent impartiality of God. 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord.'

¶ In a letter written on his return from a Class-meeting, James Smetham asks the question, 'What is a blessing?' and answers it by saying, 'A blessing is the removal of the temptation to rage and scorn and indignation; a sweetness, a satisfaction with my lot, a content with God's dealings. Take to-night. I went to Chapel fretted with plenty of dark and vexing suggestions—all sore as to feeling. I came away calm, sweet, fresh, all my cares gone, rejoicing in the God of my salvation. And this sunshine "dwells in heaven half the night." I feel it now and think no one is more happy than I.

'That is a blessing—a blessing out of Zion.

'And yet I know no more than I did at 7 p.m. who is to buy my pictures.'

Look again at the words of the text. It is 'cast thy burden *upon the Lord*'; it is not 'cast thy burden *anywhere*.' There is nothing poorer or more cowardly than just the desire to be rid of burdens. It is always the mark of meanness in a character, and the sorry witness of a contracting soul. For life grows richer by what we have to bear, and sympathies grow tenderer and broader, and the world expands into a richer place through things which we once thought would make us poorer. The Bible never urges any man recklessly to cast his cares away. As soon would it urge the captain of a ship to cast out his ballast when he was clear of port. Knowing the preciousness of what is heavy, it bids us summon to our aid the power of God, and it is *that* which makes all the difference in the world.

How much easier this secret is for us than it ever can have been for David. 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord,' he wrote—and of course he had first done it for himself. Now, what was that Lord to David—that Lord into whose keeping he committed everything? He was the King eternal and invisible, and clouds and darkness were around His throne, and men looked to the left hand and He was not there, and to the right and lo! they could not find Him. Was not the faith of these old Jews magnificent? Could we have trusted in such a God as that? Could we have believed that the infinite Creator would open His arms and take our burden in?

But we have Christ now, and that makes all the difference. For do you remember how when Christ was here men came and cast their burdens upon Him? Every one did it, and did it as by instinct—it did not matter what the burden was—and 'he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' They brought their sicknesses and they brought their fears. They brought their children and they brought themselves. And the strange thing is that though Christ was angry sometimes, and His eyes flashed in righteous indignation, not in a single instance do we find Him angry because any one cast a burden upon Him.

If our faith is to be real we must carry into our thought of God all the revelation of His Son. When we do that the Fatherhood of God becomes so wonderful that even we, with our weak and trembling faith, are able to cast our burden upon Him. It took a hero to achieve it once. The weakest woman can achieve it now. It was once the act of a sublime enthusiasm. It is now within the reach of every one of us.

KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE

1 Cor. viii. 1.—'Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.'

The Apostle Paul, as is evident from this letter, was gravely concerned about the spiritual welfare of the Corinthian Church. While there was much intellectual keenness there was a notable want of brotherly love. Certain matters of Christian conduct had caused a sharp division between the strong and the weak, as St Paul calls them, that is, between the enlightened and the ignorant, between the more liberal and the narrow-minded, breaking out in proud scorn on the one hand and bitter censoriousness on the other. In the heat of the dispute both sides were violating the unity of the Spirit and breaking the bond of peace. If this were to go on the whole edifice of the Church would be in danger of falling in ruins. St Paul, like a wise master-builder, labours to stop the breach and unite all in one. At this point in his letter he appeals to the enlightened to have more sympathy with the ignorant. Knowledge is not everything. It may even be poisonous and harmful. Love must ever be supreme, for the Church is not a school of philosophy, but a brotherhood. It is by love alone that the ideal social order, that temple of the living God, is built up and held together.

I

ST PAUL'S WORD PICTURES

The contrast between love and knowledge is boldly set forth in our text, in a pair of vivid word-pictures which, being once seen, impress themselves indelibly upon the mind's eye.

The first of these pictures is given in the word 'puffeth up.' It seems to have been much in St Paul's mind at this time, for out of seven occurrences of the word in the New Testament six are to be found in this Epistle. He evidently found the philosophy of his day a puffy and unwholesome diet, which in too many cases led to nothing more than swelled head. The image expressed by the word is probably that of a serpent puffing itself up with poisonous breath. Bacon evidently took it in that sense, for in *The Advancement of Learning* he quotes our text and carefully discusses the opinion 'that knowledge hath in it somewhat of the serpent, and therefore when it entereth into a man it makes him swell—*Scientia inflat.*'

The serpent has impressed itself upon the imagination of all peoples, and from the earliest times serpent-worship was widely practised. Its swiftness and venom made it an object of fascination and of dread; its power of casting its skin led to a belief in its immortality. In particular its habit of swollen and agitated breathing when disturbed gave the impression that it was filled with some demonic spirit, hence the myths of dragons breathing fire and smoke. St Paul was taught in the Old Testament Scriptures that it was the serpent that puffed up our first parents with an unruly desire for the fruit of the forbidden tree of knowledge, and so shattered paradise. Coming among the Greeks he found, not far from Corinth, the world-renowned shrine of Delphi, an ancient seat of snake-worship, where the priestess, being inspired by the spirit of the Python, uttered oracles of divine wisdom. Very naturally therefore the Apostle, perhaps with a touch of grim humour, pictures the proud knowledge of the Greeks and all that 'wisdom of the world which is foolishness with God' as no better than the puffing of a great adder swelling with poisonous breath. 'Of knowledge in general, and without qualification, it is said by the Apostle that "it puffeth up"; and the father of all modern science, writing directly in its praise, yet asserts this danger in more absolute terms, calling it a "venomousness" in the very nature of knowledge itself.'[1]

The second of the Apostle's word-pictures is 'edifieth.' To edify means literally to build a house, and it exactly translates the word used by St Paul. This original meaning, though now fallen into disuse, was well understood in the days when our Authorized Version was made. Of this a curious illustration may be given. When King James ascended the throne of England he was able to reward his friends in Scotland, and among others a faithful retainer in Falkland. So it came about that, while the king's translators were busy with the New Testament, his servant in Falkland was

[1] Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, iii. 67.

building a house, with gables six feet thick and rivalling the old Palace itself in height. On the front is carved a handsome inscription of thanks to the king, 'for of his princely liberality this house did I edify.' There stands the house, unshaken and habitable after three centuries, a solid and lasting proof of what it means to edify.

It is a favourite thought of St Paul's that the Kingdom of God is a building, 'a house not made with hands,' a heavenly temple into which the whole company of the redeemed are built, each in his own fit place, and all uniting to form the perfection of the whole. This heavenly temple is in process of being built now, and the proper work of the Church and of all members of the Church is to forward the building. And St Paul sees Love as the divine builder, at work everywhere, strengthening, cementing, beautifying. Love's work has nothing hollow or pretentious about it, but everywhere it is firm, substantial and enduring.

Such, in brief, are the Apostle's word-pictures. Let us look at them a little more closely and endeavour to see what they have to teach us regarding our Christian duty and the progress of the Kingdom of God.

II

KNOWLEDGE THE PUFF-ADDER

When St Paul says, 'Knowledge puffeth up,' it is evident that he is referring to loveless knowledge. Bacon puts it plainly when he says that knowledge 'if it be taken without the true corrective thereof, hath in it some nature of venom or malignity, and some effects of that venom, which is ventosity or swelling. This corrective spice, the mixture whereof maketh knowledge so sovereign, is Charity, which the Apostle immediately addeth to the former clause; for so he saith, "knowledge bloweth up, but charity buildeth up."'[1] Knowledge as such is not spoken ill of. St Paul was no obscurantist, any more than Bacon the father of modern science. He had an insatiable thirst for knowledge; with whole-hearted ardour he pursued and proclaimed the truth. His words lend no support to the position of those who despise knowledge or who timidly fear that the advance of science may undermine the faith. Doubtless he would have cordially agreed with the Egyptologist who, when asked by the Pope if he was not afraid that his discoveries might be dangerous to faith, replied, 'Holy father, truth cannot be opposed to truth.'

But as things are in this sinful world, where it is so hard to keep the balance and due proportion of things, knowledge, divorced from modesty and emancipated from the government of charity, too often becomes the minister of an irrational and irreligious vanity. Pride of learning is as prevalent and as pernicious as pride of rank or pride of wealth. We have all known some who, on the basis of a very slight or even imaginary superiority of knowledge, boast themselves to be above the common crowd, are eaten up with pride, and being, as Milton puts it,

> swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
> Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread.[1]

It is of such that the Apostle speaks, and he declares that there is no soundness in such knowledge, but all is hollow, windy and poisonous.

The insufficiency of knowledge by itself appears in two respects. First its foundations are insecure, because it can never get down to the bed rock. In plain words all human knowledge is partial and relative. It does not touch the roots of things. As the Apostle says in the second verse of this chapter, 'If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.' The great thinkers, the men who have combined wisdom with their learning, have steadily kept this in view and been most modest in their pretensions, like Newton, who compared himself to a little child gathering a few pebbles on the shore of a boundless sea. In the same spirit, though with less dignity of language, Darwin said, 'All our knowledge of this planet is something like an old hen's knowledge of a forty-acre field, in one corner of which she happens to be scratching.'[2] Accordingly, as Jeremy Taylor remarks in his chapter on Humility, 'to be proud of learning is the greatest ignorance in the world. For our learning is so long in getting, and so very imperfect, that the greatest clerk knows not the thousandth part of what he is ignorant.'[3]

[1] *Advancement of Learning*, bk. i.

[1] *Lycidas*, 126.
[2] Quoted by T. H. Darlow, in *Via Sacra*, 44.
[3] *Holy Living*.

But such confessions are comparatively rare. The acquisition of knowledge is a heady thing. All too readily do we assume that man is the measure of all things, and that our present knowledge is the final truth. Yet our knowledge is continually in process of being scrapped. The most advanced theories grow antiquated and pass away. 'Consider,' says Ruskin, 'that every generation of men stands in this relation to its successors. It is as the schoolboy: the knowledge of which it is proudest will be as the alphabet to those who follow. It had better make no noise about its knowledge; a time will come when its utmost, in that kind, will be food for scorn. Poor fools! was that all they knew? and behold how proud they were!'

Again, the insufficiency of knowledge appears in this that it has no power to bind men together into a social unity. On the contrary it is rather a disruptive force, separating between individuals, classes, and races, and holding them asunder. It was pride of knowledge that led the Greeks to speak of all other nations as barbarians, and this has generally been the attitude of the intellectuals in every age and country. They are impatient and contemptuous of the ignorant, they would say with Horace, 'Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo,' they can breathe freely only in a rare and refined atmosphere of their own.

Various things have raised partition walls, dug gulfs between men and men—race, rank, social position, birth. But no distance is greater than that caused by intellectualism between the 'cultured' and the 'uncultured.' Even within the Christian brotherhood the spectacle is often to be seen of the scholar uttering his views with no consideration, nay, even with contempt, for the feelings of his weaker brethren. 'Absorbed in his study, the critical student is tempted to forget that the Sacred Oracles demand in whomsoever would reach their meaning a sympathy with that divine truth which is latent in the text; he is tempted to separate knowledge from love, and to thrust upon an unprepared and startled public views and conclusions which may be sound, but which may not; which are certainly novel, which do grievously trouble pious people, and which are but too often and too easily made the weapons of a shallow and vicious scepticism.'[1]

[1] H. H. Henson, *Ad Rem*, 106.

Knowledge pursued in that spirit may puff men up with a great sense of progress and of power, but the whole edifice is insecure. If some leviathan does not overturn the foundations the slow wash of the ages will undermine them, or for lack of cohesion the piled up materials will fall asunder. Such was one of the many lessons of the Great War. It smote the four corners of a civilization based on science and boasting itself to be the loftiest achievement of modern knowledge, and when the whirlwind had passed the vastness of the ruins revealed the hollowness of much that had been built.

III

LOVE THE HOUSE BUILDER

But how different are the works and the ways of Love. In his great hymn in praise of love the Apostle says it 'is not puffed up.' Love is the true builder; there is something stable and enduring about all its work. 'Knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up.' 'In the sight of God, all the knowledge man can gain is nothing. But the soul, for which the great scheme of redemption was laid, be it ignorant or be it wise, is all in all. In the activity, health, and well-being of the soul lies the main difference in God's sight between one man and another. And what is all in all in God's estimate is also, be assured, all in all in men's labour. To have the heart open and the eyes clear and the emotions and thoughts warm and quick—that, and not the knowing of this or the other fact, is the state needed for all mighty doing in the world.'[1]

Consider how love lays a sure foundation, getting down to the bed-rock. It is love alone that brings us into touch with the inmost reality, which is God. Love penetrates to depths and soars to heights beyond the scope of mere knowledge. For love lifts the soul out of the sphere of the earthly and transitory into the realm of the heavenly and eternal. Mere knowledge halts on the threshold of the temple; love opens the door and passes into the holiest of all. 'If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know; but if any man loveth God, the same is known of him.'

It is a favourite saying with the mystics that

[1] Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, iii. 73.

'you can only know God by loving Him.' In this they do but echo the thought of the Apostle John, who says, 'He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.' We see how inevitable this is when we reflect that, in our human intercourse one with another, we only really know those whom we love. True knowledge as between persons means intimacy. The hid treasures of personality are not discovered by intellectual apprehension. In the cold light of reason the soul shrinks and closes like a sensitive flower in frost, but in the warm atmosphere of love it opens and reveals its beauty. Indeed the Bible uses the word 'knowledge' in the profound sense of marriage, declaring that man and woman do not 'know' each other till in love they become one heart and one flesh. Even so he who loves God knows God and is known of God in the deepest and truest sense. This is the best of all knowledge and the only sure foundation upon which to build. Sir James Simpson, being asked what he considered his greatest discovery, instantly replied, 'The discovery that I have a Saviour.' Rightly he regarded the saving knowledge of God's love in Christ as infinitely more valuable than all the sciences.

Once more, consider how love, the builder, not only lays a sure foundation but binds together and cements the whole building. Loveless knowledge, we have seen, is a disruptive force; love is a power which everywhere attracts and unites. Over the wide world, nay throughout the whole universe, its blessed influence is felt. Imagine, if you can, a world from which love had fled. With no family affection, no friendship, no social order; it would be a return to utter chaos and black night. It is by love that the world stands and all its diverse elements are held together. And love is everywhere working to heal divisions, to subdue enmities and to bring all into harmony. Tennyson has said that by prayer

> the whole round earth is every way
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God,[1]

and prayer is the upward breathing of love. So it is by love that man is knit to his fellowman and earth is linked with heaven.

Love's work, therefore, is substantial and enduring. There will come a time, says the Apostle, when knowledge shall vanish away, but love will abide. All history shows us knowledge in the act of vanishing away. The knowledge of one generation is antiquated and ridiculous in the next. But deeds of love shine across the ages with undiminished splendour. Some one has said that any schoolgirl of to-day could pass a more creditable examination than Abraham, but Abraham, the pioneer of faith and the friend of God, is 'the father of us all.' In like manner the widow's mite, the Samaritan's wine and oil, and Mary's box of spikenard are assured of immortality because they are the precious fruits of love. So shall it be with every loving word and deed, however humble and unknown. They help to bind together and build up the Kingdom of God in the world, and we have the Saviour's express assurance that they shall not be forgotten nor fail of their reward.

[1] *Passing of Arthur.*

IV

THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

Now all this surely points the direction in which lies the hope of the world. We are all possessed in these days by the idea of progress. We look with confidence for the dawning of a brighter age, when the present evils will be done away and a far higher social order be evolved. And we would fain do something in our time to forward the good cause. Now there are many among ourselves, as in ancient Greece, who regard knowledge as the supreme thing, and who base their hopes of the future of mankind on the advance of science. Nature will yield her secrets to the investigator and all her powers will be subdued to the obedience of man; disease will be eliminated and all the conditions of human life made easier. Then at length man will enter into his kingdom as lord of all.

Is there not in all this a great deal of the spirit of that knowledge which puffeth up, 'proud knowledge,' Bacon calls it, 'with an intent in man to give law unto himself, and to depend no more upon God's commandments'? [1] Suppose it were to succeed and the end in view to be fully attained, would it be a desirable consummation? We may say with confidence that unless it were governed and transfused by love it would be a hideous and impossible world. We have found, by recent dreadful experience, that science may be made the devil's minister

[1] *Advancement of Learning*, bk. i.

as well as the servant of God, and that all its mighty forces, instead of being life-giving and serviceable, may become suicidal to man. Physicists tell us that in every atom of matter there are terrific forces of attraction and repulsion which, being in equilibrium, maintain the stability of the world. If the attractive force which holds together the smallest pebble were for a single moment to be suspended it would burst asunder with an explosion that would shatter everything for miles around, and were the same to happen on a larger scale the whole world 'would dissipate itself to the confines of space.' [1]

Love is the sole power of coherence in the social order. If its benign influence were diminished or relaxed science would speedily turn earth into hell. This is no wild fancy but a sober prospect which at this very hour hangs like a dark thundercloud on the horizon. The possibility of race suicide and the downfall of civilization by the power of science governed by hate is gravely discussed, and a leading scientist recently uttered the fervent prayer that man's knowledge would not further increase beyond his moral power to govern it. 'And, therefore, so far from true is it that science can take the place of religion as the sovereign guide of life, that we have to safeguard ourselves through religion from the perils of our scientific achievements, lest they become the instruments of man's doom instead of the means of his emancipation and enrichment. . . . Science is the switch-board of life, and shows us how to direct and control its currents, but she cannot insure that the energies thus released shall be wisely and sanely used. Religion alone can do that. And, therefore, man needs religion more to-day than ever, just because the New Knowledge has increased man's power for mischief as well as for good. Only by the inspirations and restraints of religion can science hope to make the Future of man the climax and glory of his troubled Past.' [2] In short, the hope of the world lies in the establishment of a realm of love which shall spread abroad in ever widening circles until it embraces all mankind. And this is nothing else but the coming of the Kingdom of God.

J. H. Morrison.

[1] F. Soddy, in *Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, 369.

[2] Griffith-Jones, *The Dominion of Man*, 295.

The Christian Standpoint

1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.—'Gods many, and lords many. But to us . . .'

There is a great deal of meaning in these three words, 'but to us.' They contain at least the mystery of standpoint—the mighty and far-reaching difference made by a point of view. As men wander about the world, they find how every different post of observation gives a different universe. On one year's holiday we see the Alps from the north; the next year we see some of the same summits from the south; and we have difficulty in recognizing from the new standpoint the peaks that had been familiar friends. The very heavens change their aspect if we change the meridian from which we view them. It is not different with the landscapes of the mind and the firmaments which are mapped only by the astronomy of the soul.

¶ 'We could come to no compromise,' Robert Louis Stevenson wrote of those whose 'facts' were no facts to him, 'as to what was or what was not important in the life of man. Turn as we pleased, we all stood back to back in a big ring and saw another quarter of the heavens, with different mountain-tops along the sky-line and different constellations overhead.' [1]

Now because there is in this phrase the fact of standpoint, there is also behind it something more—the line of development which resulted in the standpoint. Difference of standpoint, like other things, requires a cause adequate to account for it. If you see the Southern Cross while I see the Polar Star, that is because I live north of the Equator and you south of it. Here are a group of African tribesmen trying to understand the motives and actions of an Englishman. Captain Speke said that when he was among the Somali, and walked up and down to take exercise, they suspected him of some secret and mysterious designs, as they could not understand any man exerting himself so strenuously without grave necessity. Those children of the sun found the energetic explorer a problem; *but to us*, who are children of the temperate zone and heirs of the strenuous life, his motives are plain and his purpose congenial. Behind differences of standpoint there lie other and deeper differences—ancestry, environment,

[1] *Virginibus Puerisque.*

intellectual tradition and inheritance, or it may be a personal experience that has forged conviction in its glowing fires. Gods many and lords many, *but to us* the world is different; and there is a reason why the world is different; *to us* the darkness is past and the true Light already shineth!

St Paul is here setting over against the outlook of the great world the point of view taken by the little circle of the Church. A practical difficulty has arisen, the question of eating meats sacrificed to idols. He follows the matter out on grounds of expediency, and there also he is worthy of himself and of the gospel he serves. But for the moment he takes higher ground than that of expediency: he takes the ground of absolute truth. An idol is nothing. It is a mere name, even if, to lingering ignorance and superstition, it represents a real influence. There are gods many and lords many from the standpoint of surrounding paganism. There are gods named and nameless. And to the average man, who knows no better, these may cast a shadow that obscures the shadow of the Almighty. *But to us* there is another world, another atmosphere, another consciousness; what have we to do any more with idols, either by serving them or by dreading them, we who have known the living and true God? So with these three emphatic little words he withdraws his readers' gaze from the conventional outlook, and bids them survey the universe from the Christian standpoint. Watch him move to his point of view. 'But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we through him.'

Most of our standpoints are formed by one or both of two things: *tradition*, whether family tradition, or national, or social, or racial; and *experience*, which is not so diffused as tradition, but sometimes makes up in intensity what it lacks in comprehensiveness. Both are to be found here—going to form the standpoint of the Apostle and his readers.

1. *A Great Tradition.*—'There is but one God, of whom are all things.' St Paul did not invent that sublimely comprehensive thought. For the moment he is writing as a Jew, even while he is addressing himself to Gentile converts—not forgetting his honourable ancestry, his place in the nation to which were committed the oracles of God. 'There is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things.' But that is not the whole current of lofty tradition which flows round the island of this man's life: two currents have met and mingled just above the point where he stands beckoning his readers to join him. 'And one Lord, Jesus Christ': the Christian tradition, with the freshness of the morning still upon it, has mingled with that of earlier days. *Jesus*—the human name suggests certain historic facts, too familiar to need repetition. *Christ*—these facts fitted with certain earlier expectations, and the conviction was born and grew that He was the One who should come, and that men need not look for another. *Lord*—for the impression He made was so tremendous that adoration gathered instinctively around Him, and a new authority was established for the minds and consciences of men. And *One*—for the facts involved were so unique and so Divine that, as there never had been, so there never could be, anyone worthy to be compared with Him. Even if the world lay in darkness, to St Paul and to his readers these great facts were known.

2. *A Great Experience.*—It required more than these traditions to create the point of view; the tradition might have remained cold and powerless unless it had been kindled into a great experience. 'But to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and *we unto him.*' The thinking here is very compact; there is a chapter in a phrase; there is a moral and intellectual revolution in three words. There is not only one God, as a fact external to us—a fact which we might hear of by the hearing of the ear or hold by some logic of the mind. We unto Him!—turned towards Him, taught to live for Him, enabled to find the end and glory of our being in Him. So also with the specifically New Testament teaching which had blended with the older tradition: it too was not only a tradition but an experience. See how that comes out: 'One Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and *we through him.*' Again the thought is concentrated to the uttermost: there is a chapter in a phrase; there is a miracle of regeneration in three words. We are what we are through Him. We are brought near to the living God through Him.

3. So the Christian standpoint was taken. Two illustrations of the effect of the new point of view must suffice.

(1) The Old Testament became a new book. Its central mysteries were unlocked. Its various parts were seen to be strung together on a thread of gold. It was felt to be a book with movement in it, and infinite desire; and the movement was understood now in the light of the historical climax that had come to be its end and crown. It confessed its own incompleteness, and cried aloud with many herald voices that were never adequately interpreted until God Himself supplied the interpretation in the fullness of the time. It is no exaggeration to say that the men who took the Christian standpoint felt that the Old Testament was, for the first time, profoundly and adequately understood.

(2) The world and its history received a new interpretation. Disordered and sinful though the world might be, it was really a Divine world; it was in its inmost being and purpose a Christian world. Everywhere there could be read the signature of the Infinite Power, Wisdom and Love; everywhere could be heard the whisper of the Everlasting Reason, the Word that had become Incarnate once and once only, but was diffused throughout all space and time. It is a common experience for men to find in a book what they bring to it. It was said long ago that some people thought Homer a Stoic; others found him somewhat Epicurean; others again made him a Peripatetic or an Academician: in other words, they read their own doctrines in him. So, and with more truth and reason, those who took the Christian standpoint found in the world the Divinity and the Christianity they brought to their survey. All things came from the One Source. And as the world came out of the One Creative Wisdom, so its final destiny was to be conquered by the One Redeeming Love.

¶ The unbelief or agnosticism of our times is largely to be accounted for by the fact that men have discovered the hopelessness of *finding* God either in or behind the phenomena of nature. He is there present, but the supreme discovery must be made in their own hearts. 'That which you seek without you, you have already within you,' and Pascal went even further when he said, 'Thou wouldst not seek me, hadst Thou not already found me.' It is within and not without that we are to find God, and once found within, His Presence is discovered without.[1]

Now as for ourselves, we are at least half-way to the Christian point of view because the Christian tradition encompasses our lives. To some, for reasons we cannot know meantime, have come evil traditions and teachings of death, *but to us* the good word of God; to some an evil ancestry, but to us a great cloud of witnesses. We must not be content with the tradition, we must seek the experience. If we seek it with our whole hearts we shall find it; we shall find the happiness of those who believe so much in the one God and Father that they live unto Him, who keep so near to the one Lord Jesus Christ that they become through Him all that God means them to be.

I Believe in God the Father

1 Cor. viii. 6.—'To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him' (R.V.).

In its first section the Apostles' Creed makes two statements about the God in whom we trust—that He is the one Sovereign Maker and Ruler of the world, and that He has a good purpose in it. God is all-governing; and He is Father.

¶ General Grant used to say that he found it hard to remember all the creeds, and still harder to believe some of them. 'As many times as I have attended the Episcopal Church, when they stand up to repeat the Apostles' Creed, I can never get beyond "I believe in God the Father Almighty." I can remember that much and I believe that with all my heart.'

Let us consider this truth—that God is the Sustainer of the Universe, the all-Sovereign Father—first, in relation to the world of Nature.

1. The Christian as he looks out upon the world believes it to be the work and the care of one mind, and that a mind which has a good will to men. This belief we inherit from the Jewish Church, which put it in the forefront of its Sacred Scriptures. The story of Creation that stands at the opening of the Bible differs

[1] D. Butler, *George Fox in Scotland*, 47.

from the stories of Creation which we find in the early traditions of all other peoples, including those allied to the Hebrew stock, in one main respect—that it attributes it to the work of a single and good God. 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' And this teaching of the Old Testament, that, behind the universe we see is the creating will of a good God, was confirmed by the teaching of our Lord, and has passed into our Creed. Observe that Christ taught us nothing, and the Creed is equally silent, upon the *method* of God's creation. For our knowledge of the method we appeal to the best science of our own day, just as the pious Jew appealed to the best tradition of his day.

People ask sometimes how this revelation of God's energy of love at work behind the worlds was conveyed to the prophets. We cannot tell. St Paul connected revelations with visions, and related his own experience of a revelation so given (2 Cor. xii. 1); but there might be revelation by other methods. We can, however, illustrate such a revelation to ourselves by the intensity of conviction that possessed such clear-eyed souls as Francis of Assisi, that upon all the phenomena of Nature there remained the print of God's creating finger. To our own poet, Wordsworth, Nature was but the garment for a Supreme Spirit 'who moved through all things,' and revealed His presence in their joy and beauty. Wordsworth did not reason about the Divine origin of Nature; he was assured of it. In every form of natural being he discerned an active principle:

> Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
> No chasm, no solitude; from link to link
> It circulates, the Soul of all the worlds.

Our faith in God must rest upon experience of some kind. There are certainly those to whom the sights and sounds of Nature make no direct spiritual appeal confirmatory of the belief in the presence of an Eternal Spirit behind all the phenomena of sense. But also there are those to whom this appeal of beauty and grandeur comes home; and to those who can receive it, it speaks with no uncertain voice.

¶ Professor Tyndall tells us that when he ascended the White Alp—he was the first to ascend it—he got to the top in the evening, and he went by himself on the spur of the mountain and took his notebook with him to jot down some scientific observations. But from where he stood he beheld the glory of the Alps, white peaks smitten by the sword-beams of the setting sun until they flamed all round him in a sea of glory mingled with fire. It was so magnificent, so divine, that he says, 'I put my notebook in my pocket. I returned my pencil to its sheath. I felt it was not the time to jot down scientific notes. I felt the hour of worship had struck.'[1]

And yet even this faith partakes of the nature of a venture, because the experience is not realized at all times; and also because there are other experiences which seem to conflict with it. From the first there was always in Nature a margin of unreconciled experience—a problem of pain and death—which the good and wise sought to understand, and to which they gave such interpretation as we find in the Book of Job; but the existence of this problem and the difficulty of meeting it did not lead them to deny the great truth of which they were more convinced than of any merely sensible experience—that God was in the world, and that He had a good purpose in it for His people.

¶ Tennyson taught us to rely for the support of our faith mainly on the revelation God had given of Himself in man; especially in the power to love. Speaking of his own faith in God, he says:

> I found Him not in world or sun,
> Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
> Nor thro' the questions men may try,
> The petty cobwebs we have spun:
>
> If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
> I heard a voice 'believe no more'
> And heard an ever-breaking shore
> That tumbled in the Godless deep;
>
> A warmth within the breast would melt
> The freezing reason's colder part,
> And like a man in wrath the heart
> Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'

And Tennyson goes on to tell us that it was after he had found God in direct intercourse

[1] J. M. Gibson, in *The Twentieth Century Pastor*, Oct. 1918.

with his own spirit that he came to realize how through Nature He was moulding mankind :

Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near :

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands ;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

It is interesting to remember that in the same poem Tennyson tells us how he too, like the prophets of old, received in a trance a revelation of God's presence in the universe ; conveyed to him, as he surmised, though of this he came to doubt, through the agency of his departed friend :

The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on *that which is*, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world.

2. But such experiences are for the few. For most of us the prime witness to God lies in our own being. This direct belief, this upward look from the soul to God, is indeed the very centre and core of faith, from which it may spread over all else. If we turn for illustration to those Psalms of the Hebrew saints which enshrine their response of faith to the revelation God made of Himself in the prophets—although we shall find here and there a Psalm which acknowledges with joy the presence of God in Nature—yet for the most part they are confessions of what God had done for their own souls, individually or as a people.

Whatever may be the truth about spiritual experiences which are now only matters of memory, here in our constant selves we have a fact of which we are not suspicious, and which we can take stock of at any time. We can say *I*, and as we say *I*, we are conscious of a living, thinking, willing, loving person—' fearfully and wonderfully made ' ; and when our church tells us that we are the children of God, made ' in His own image,' our hearts find it very credible ; and we raise our thoughts to God as a living, thinking, willing, loving being, the perfection of all that we see to be best in ourselves at our best, the *Father* of the spirits of men.

3. To turn, now, to that side of our profession of faith which is expressed by the epithet ' all-ruling,' the belief that God orders the course of the world, and has set before it a noble end. This is involved in the very fact of creation. Creation by a good God carries with it the ideas of purpose in creating and providence in bringing this purpose to fulfilment. A God who is Father must have at heart the highest welfare of His children ; and one who is Almighty will pursue that welfare till it is secured. This faith in God's providence, to which our hearts thus give in their assent, we as a matter of fact owe—like the rest of our belief in God—to the revelation in the Scriptures, of which the main topic is the gradual working out of God's good purpose in Israel, and through Israel for the world. The Jewish prophets laid their chief stress on Jehovah's mercy and truth, or, as we should say, His love and faithfulness. Having promised to bless the world by their means, He brought them out of Egypt, guarded them in the wilderness, subdued before them the land of Canaan, and by judges and kings and prophets trained them in His ways ; ever holding out before them some new hope, if they would be willing and obedient. From the first, emphasis is laid on the fatherly care and zeal of Jehovah. His very name is said by some scholars to imply the limitlessness of His goodwill to His people : the sense being not ' I am that I am,' but ' I will be what I will be.' He was Jehovah ' merciful and gracious, slow to anger, plenteous in goodness and truth.'

For us, this prophetic revelation of God's Fatherhood has been almost superseded by the revelation in Jesus Christ, who showed on the one hand the utmost that God's love would do and bear to bring man to his goal ; while, on the other, He showed that man found his true life and happiness in responding to that Divine love. But even so, even for us who believe in the Father not so much through the prophets as through the Son, faith still retains its character as a confidence which is less than proof, owing to the experiences that still remain unreconciled. For Christ gave us no final solution of the problem how evil can exist in a world which is governed by the fatherly love of almighty power.

The Apostles' Creed was very probably framed to meet the teaching of the heretic

Marcion, who in the second century found this very problem of evil his stone of stumbling. Believing that evil was a property of matter, he denied that the supreme God could be the God who created matter, and so he was forced to distinguish the creating God of the Old Testament from the redeeming God of the New Testament. The former he regarded as an inferior deity, just indeed, but not loving, who did His best, but was obliged to punish His creatures for disobedience; the latter was the supreme God, who took pity on men and sent His Son to save them. Of course such a theory, which separated righteousness from love, justice from mercy, was no solution of the difficulty, and only made havoc of the Bible by ignoring the tenderness of the God of the Old Testament and the holiness of the God of the New. Moreover, it destroyed all belief in the providence of God. A God who did not make mankind and had no purpose in them, but simply took pity on them in a crisis, was entitled to such gratitude as would befit the Good Samaritan in our Lord's parable, but had no claim to obedience, or co-operation, or filial love. And so the Church would have none of Marcion's explanations of the difficulty; but expressed in clear words the truth of which it was sure, despite its difficulties—'I believe in God, the *all*-ruling Father.'

I Believe in Jesus Christ

1 Cor. viii. 6.—'To us there is . . . one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him' (R.V.).

From its first confession, 'I believe in God the Father Almighty,' the Creed passes to its second, 'I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord.' Manifestly, everybody must believe in God before he can believe in Jesus Christ in any deep sense; for to say that 'Jesus is the Son of God' already implies a belief in God. At the same time, the belief in Jesus at once reacts upon the belief in God. The heathen convert, though he may employ the same word for God as before, has very different thoughts about Him; he is taught to believe that the holiness and loving-kindness of Jesus are the holiness and loving-kindness of the Creator God; and even the pious Jew gained a new insight into what these great qualities meant—the mercy and truth which he had always held to be the attributes of Jehovah. The two beliefs therefore go together. First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world; secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind.

Our Lord's work of redemption is summed up in the Creed under three epithets. Jesus is described as (1) the Christ of God; (2) the Only Son of the Father; (3) our Lord. Let us take these three descriptions in order.

1. We say, first, that Jesus is the Christ of God. By 'Christ' is meant 'the anointed'—that is, consecrated—servant of God for the work of redemption, who was promised to the fathers. And in so saying we express our belief that the redemption which Jesus effected, though it came at a definite epoch of the world's history, was not an unexpected event, a sudden, isolated act of compassion on man's misery, but was part of a process fore-ordained in the counsel of God from the beginning. We point back along the history of the chosen people to a long series of kings and prophets, whose lives and writings are recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures, and show how they were always looking forward to a Divine redemption, always desiring to see the days of the promised Deliverer.

It is most interesting to look back and trace the slow development of this faith and hope, observing how the nature of the expected redemption changed as the conception of the need deepened; how, first, it is a quite general faith that God, who had made a special covenant with the nation, would not be false to His promise, but would send them prosperity; and then, how, in a time of national trouble, it connects itself with the restoration of a new shoot to the kingly stock of David—David the good king, God's chosen son, anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows—and so becomes a vision of good government, a kingdom of righteousness, in which the weak things of the world shall have the protection they crave.

Next, we observe how side by side with this hope for a righteous kingdom there grew up another hope, based upon the great fact of prophecy in the nation, and the knowledge of God's will which prophecy brought—the hope that the knowledge of God's will should not be limited to exceptional men here and there

gifted with a spirit of prophecy, but that the earth should be 'full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea.'

And yet once more there grew up (at least in some minds) an expectation, which later found expression for itself in a code of sacrificial ritual, that the anticipated conversion of the nation to the will of God, and the forgiveness of its sins, could not be effected without the sufferings of the innocent. The sin offering, by which the sins of the people were expiated, if it found its suggestion in this and that particular experience of the virtue of vicarious suffering, yet looked forward still more confidently to the figure of an innocent Sufferer, by whose bearing of their iniquities the whole people should be justified, and by whose stripes they should be healed.

These were the great hopes that inspired the nation. The redemption of the people was seen to require a righteous life in a consecrated society, all the members of which should know the will of God—a society which for its very existence (as some surmised) presupposed some great initial act of sacrifice. This idea, however, of redemption through suffering could not have been widespread, for when Jesus Himself, on that famous journey to Emmaus, expounded to Cleopas and his companion the things concerning the Redeemer of Israel, among the things He showed them was the truth that the Christ must have suffered, and the idea was strange to them.

There is no need to remind ourselves how thoroughly this office of the Christ was fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth. As a matter of fact, He did bring redemption by setting up a society in which the characteristic feature was a knowledge of God's will, issuing in a life of righteousness; and He did set it up by virtue of a great act of sacrifice. 'By his stripes we are healed.'

¶ I believe that *Jesus* is the Christ. That is to say, I believe that there is a living bond between me, the poor helpless human creature, and the absolute perfect Being. I believe that His love has come near to me in a human person, whom I may claim as the brother of me and my race. I believe that Person is the Son of God; that in Him dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily. I believe, therefore, that I am related to that Love which created the world, and all that is in it. I may claim affiance in it. Again, I believe that Jesus is the *Christ*. I believe that He is anointed with the spirit of God to the end that He may bestow that spirit upon men. I believe that the spirit in Him was a uniting spirit, a self-sacrificing spirit, a spirit of active, suffering, sympathizing Love. I believe that that spirit is acting upon us, and can work in us the love which is most foreign to our selfishness.[1]

2. To come then to the second term: 'His only Son.' The history of the phrase 'Son of God,' as applied to our Lord, is of great interest. It began by being a synonym for 'the Christ,' as is plain from its use by the demoniacs: 'What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?' But our Lord seems to have avoided its use, just as He avoided the other Messianic title of 'Son of David,' because of its associations. It had become worn like a coin rubbed by passing from hand to hand till it becomes, in fact, a mere counter. The teaching that the Apostles received from their Master was full of references to 'My Father in heaven.' And the conviction was thus gradually formed in their minds that He to whom God was the Father in the unique sense in which God was the Father of Jesus must be in a unique sense His Son. The point intended to be brought out by the word 'Son' was the identity of nature as witnessed to by His words and His works. Jesus was the image of God; in St John's words, His glory was 'as of an only-begotten of a father.'

¶ The Godhead shines through Christ, but *He* is not a mere transparent medium. It is Himself that He is showing us when He is showing us God. 'He that hath seen Me hath seen'—not the light that streams through Me—but 'hath seen in Me, the Father.' And because He is 'Himself Divine and the Divine Revealer, therefore the faith that grasps Him is inseparably one with the faith that grasps God. Men could look upon a Moses, an Isaiah, or a Paul and in them recognize the eradiation of the Divinity that imparted itself through them, but the medium was forgotten in proportion as that which it revealed was beheld. You cannot forget Christ in order to see God more clearly, but to behold Him is to behold God.[2]

¶ The character of Jesus is the character of Almighty God, the holiness of Jesus the holiness

[1] F. D. Maurice; [2] A. Maclaren.

of God, the wrath of Jesus the wrath of God, the compassion of Jesus the compassion of God, the Cross of Jesus the revelation of the sorrow and self-sacrificing love with which the sin of man fills the heart of the Eternal.[1]

And then the further question arose, Was this unique Son always, or only after His human birth? There is no doubt as to the opinion held by the first Christians. And the mere recognition of Christ as Divine carried with it also the recognition of His eternity. This, of course, is not to say that there was always manhood in the Godhead, but that there was always sonship, the potentiality of manhood. St John, in the preface to his Gospel, traces the course of the gradual revelation of this sonship: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' And then, finally, the Word became human flesh; the full image of Divine Sonship was manifested.

If the aspect of redemption which we emphasize under the acknowledgment that Jesus is the Christ be the hallowing of our nature by living in Christ and Christ in us, the aspect emphasized by this second acknowledgment that Jesus is the Son of God is one that directly follows from that—namely, that through the indwelling presence we too have received the adoption of sons, and look up to God as our Father. We are admitted through Him into the family of God, and enjoy that freedom which is the special attribute of sonship.

3. We pass to the concluding phrase of the confession, 'our Lord,' which emphasizes the truth that the Father is still known to us only through the Son, and that all authority has been committed unto Him. He is our Lord, the Vicegerent of the All-sovereign Ruler.

This acknowledgment is made emphatically by St Peter in his speech at the first Pentecost, 'Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made this Jesus, whom ye crucified, Lord as well as Christ.' That 'Jesus is Lord' seems to St Paul also, in Dr Hort's words, 'the fundamental and sufficient expression of Christian faith.'

If Jesus is our Lord, then His commandments must be the rule of our lives; there is nothing for it, for us who accept His Lordship, but 'to bring every thought into captivity to his obedience' (2 Cor. x. 5). 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' To such an appeal there can be no reply. And if Jesus is Lord—the one Lord through whom are all things—we must call upon Him for what we need. 'Calling upon the name of the Lord' especially marks and stamps a Christian. Faith, then, in Jesus of Nazareth, as the Christ, and as the only Son of God, comes to expression, and so to reality, as we bow our knees to call upon One whom our hearts acknowledge to be in very truth our own Lord.

[1] R. Law.

Thy Weak Brother

1 Cor. viii. 11.—'For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died' (R.V.).

One thing which puzzled and almost baffled Paul was the persistence with which many members in the Church of Christ thought exclusively of themselves: their own views, their own likings, their own convenience provided them with a sufficient rule. It might have been expected that, after their Lord's example, they would have looked not on their own things, but also on the things of others, for to Jesus what suited Himself was insignificant in comparison with what suited others. But for these decent church-going people the relation was turned the other way: if they did not like or did not trust a man, or did not quite know what to do with him, they left him out of account, heedless of the fact that thus he might go to ruin. Paul speaks of this anomaly with a vehemence of feeling which makes his sentence travel brokenly and slow. As he dictated it to a friend we may be sure that the phrases were uttered with a kind of explosive staccato, word following word, each with its load of emotional significance, and each requiring to be separately paused over: 'So he is perishing, this weak man, perishing through your conceit of knowledge, your brother for whom Christ died.'

¶ The motto 'Saved to Serve,' and the Archbishop of York's expression, 'Confirmation is the layman's ordination for service,' adequately expressed the vicar's teaching, and were frequently used to promote this spirit in the congregation. There was ample opportunity for service within the parish, but the parish was only part of the diocese, and the diocese part of the world for which our Lord gave His life.

Therefore service outside the borders of the parish was essential if life were to be lived in accordance with the teaching of Christ. The vicar taught that a live Church is a missionary Church.[1]

There are people amongst ourselves who frankly are not interested in any missionary appeal. Their feeling does not commonly shape itself in words, but in effect it is something like this: These poor folks about whom you are so distressed have yet a life of their own. It is not the life that we should choose, and in many cases it seems quite pitifully naked; but they hold to it, so that, when another is offered them, they prefer the present. They have their enjoyments and their mirth, though to us these seem vacant and sometimes brutal, and they have their loyalties and affections, and their abounding mutual kindnesses. So why should we, who understand so little, strike in to induce them to change their ways? What right have we to do so, and what reasonable prospect of success? 'East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.'

Such feelings are scarcely concealed in the minds of many intelligent people, and they work mischief in our common life and effort; so let us consider this appeal which Paul addressed to his friends on behalf of their hapless neighbours. It is fourfold.

1. The first appeal is contained in a word which only a great idealist, or one who had learned from such, would think of using in this connection: these men, says Paul, are *perishing*. We might regard their representatives of to-day with disdain because they are noisy and ribald and unmannerly, or with disgust because they are foul, or with sheer bewilderment as if they belonged to another kingdom of existence; but it is only noble things which perish. Epictetus, who was a supreme idealist, bids men see that they do not behave as beasts, 'for, if you do, you are making the man in you to perish.' No one who has learned of Christ the dignity of human nature will doubt that Epictetus was right; and he will look on man or woman living basely with a pitying sense of calamity.

As followers of Jesus Christ we peculiarly are pledged to this lordly view of human nature. Our Master held that the sunken woman who affronts us was made at first in God's own image, and that it is only by evil inheritance or by disastrous misadventure that she has sunk to where we find her. When we consider what she was meant to be and what she is fast becoming, we are driven to borrow Paul's word and say that she is *perishing*. The word is ideal through and through, and it makes a vast difference in the energy and hopefulness of our work for others if, with full sincerity, we can employ it. Chesterton objects to the title of one of Maxim Gorki's stories—'Creatures that once were Men,' and insists that the idea underlying the title accounts for the failure of the earlier Russian Revolution. If the condition of the unfortunate is to be changed, it must be by those who, in spite of all collapses, discern in them creatures who still are men.

Corinth was a city flagrantly corrupt and profligate, where even religion lent its sanction to vice; and yet in that evil place some men and women had dared to take one step—the first. They forsook the worship of the city's goddess Aphrodite, going no more to the temples where they had witnessed such abominable excess, and they began to worship Jesus Christ as Lord. They were self-assertive still and quarrelsome, and sometimes they stumbled back to the old enormities; but though they were not perfect they had made a beginning, and a fresh growth of habit began to appear. They observed the Lord's Day, they prayed to Christ as Lord, they displayed a new sensitiveness to feelings of shame and pity, and they were extraordinarily kind in helping one another. But sometimes, through bad example or conceit, they were exposed to the poisonous air of idolatry, and these hopeful growths were blighted in a night. The old habits reasserted themselves, and Paul with all stringency of meaning declares of such a man that he is perishing.

This pitiful record is repeated every day. Wherever there is a living heart in church or mission, men and women are to be found precariously attempting a better life; they may be very ignorant, frail, and inconstant, and yet, at God's summons, they have begun to aim at the highest. When they heard the call they went home, on that appalling stair, to endeavour to live as sons, as daughters of the light. The tokens of new life in them are pitifully slender, and yet, of their kind, they are real. But, as in Corinth, temptation may be thrust too

[1] Ellis N. Gowing, *John Edwin Watts-Ditchfield*, 72.

fiercely upon the ill-established nature, and the woman falls. 'She is back at her old ways,' people say, but if we judge as Christians ought we shall report in a worthier fashion; for this is a woman perishing, and we dare not refuse her our help.

2. Paul sharpens his appeal by adding—'This weak man.' Some people who are not influenced by any ideal views of human nature have yet a fine faculty of indignation on behalf of undefended men and things. These may admittedly be of little value, and yet their champions cannot sit still and see them crushed. This prompt rallying to the side of the weak is a sign of wholesomeness in character.

The fact that people are dull in intelligence, slow and fumbling in their work, and inveterately disposed to evil should never be to a right-thinking man a reason for neglect. The generous heart which is in us protests against that. From their birth they have been ill-nourished, and their minds worse nourished than their bodies. They are beset by evil example, and there is no sound public opinion to make it a disgrace for them to fall, and thus they blunder on down to the extreme of disaster. Morally they are mere children and children spoiled, with a child's slim furnishing of knowledge joined to a man's imperious passions and appetites. Could anything be weaker than creatures thus composed? or could any one have a stronger claim upon our chivalrous consideration?

In particular, there are the children in such homes—frank, winning, attractive; and yet, if no hand is stretched out to rescue them, they will inevitably go down into the same abyss. They can scarcely help themselves. Paul felt that the very sense of justice might compel men to activity. So long as we do not know the conditions it is possible to live at ease; but when, in face of knowledge, we still make no attempt we become partners in doing the wrong. 'A false system has for accomplices every one who, by his silence, spares it,' says Vinet; and people who intend no harm are yet, by their indolence and aloofness, helping to crush these 'weak' men.

Thou who art Lord of all the tender pities,
  Mercy Incarnate, human and divine,
How can we write Thy name upon these cities
  Wherein Thy children live like herded swine?
Would not those eyes, that saw their angels gazing
  Into the brightness of the Father's face,
Turn on this slum with Love and fury blazing,
  Shriv'ling our souls with shame of such a place?

'Where are my children, those the Father gave you?
  What have you done with babes that bore My name?
Was it for this I suffered so to save you?
  Must I for ever burn for you in shame?'[1]

3. To bring the appeal still closer Paul adds—'Your brother,' by which he meant—'Your fellow Christian.' In these early days the tie of common faith was so strong as, in many cases, to supersede the bonds of blood and country. In the Catacombs there are tombs of noble ladies who sought in death to lie, not beside their kindred, but with those who shared the faith of Jesus. 'You are all one loaf,' says Paul, using a homely image; for though there were better and worse amongst them, they composed one family, with claims admitted one upon the other.

This tie is lamentably slackened now, and yet it surely counts for something. George Borrow tells of an Irish tinker woman who said to him, 'Oh, sir, give us God! We need Him, for we are a sinful people, and many is the sinful thing we have done.' And when Borrow tried lamely to escape by offering her money, she screamed after him, 'We do not want your money, we have plenty of that. Give us God!' That is not imaginative work; in the unlikeliest quarters there are remnants of early instruction, and cravings and returnings of heart, which largely remain ineffectual through the absence of a friend. It is not a little tragic that, in this Christian land, there are many homes in which Christ's name is never mentioned except in the form of an oath; but even that is a link and an appeal.

4. Paul's crowning appeal is that for those whom we might not cross the street to help 'Christ died.' To make it possible for them to live as God intends, our Lord endured the worst; and when we turn from them, we are doing what we can to secure that He died in vain.

[1] G. A. Studdert Kennedy, *Lighten Our Darkness.*

¶ Lord Shaftesbury's whole career was directed toward the removal of social iniquities and the establishment of social righteousness. Never did any Englishman believe more strongly in the social duty of bringing every human blessing to cheer and uplift the homes and environment of the humblest populace. To Shaftesbury, as to every true evangelical, the 'downmost man' was an individual made in the image of God; a creature of infinite worth, for whose sake Christ died.[1]

One thing that blunts our sympathy is an imperfect understanding of all that Jesus aimed at in His dying. When we say that He came 'to seek and to save that which was lost,' we are to understand that He came to save not only all men, but all man, not the soul only, which has a ghostly, unsubstantial sound, but the person—to make him in all his faculties and aptitudes a new creature. What was endeavoured in the Cross was not some imaginary or theological change, in which some of us could never take the faintest interest: it was the renovation of a life—gladness where depression reigned, and light in place of darkness, and courage and self-control instead of the dispositions of a slave. That is salvation, and surely such an end is worth our seeking.

¶ We are thankful we get the worst people on earth here. We have had hundreds of converts here who were such outcasts that the dogs would bark at them on the streets. With no other purpose but to see if they could get a night's lodging or a bite to eat, they came here, and here Jesus met them and saved them by His grace, and they are now taking care of their families—fine strong Christian men, members of the churches, and a blessing to all who knew them, when a few years ago they were an unmitigated curse to society.[2]

It was for this that Jesus lived and died—that there might be no lost or outcast creatures anywhere. What we do for our poor neighbours is inevitably marred by misunderstanding of their need, and by inconstancy and selfishness in supplying what we do understand; and yet, with all its faults, our service is in prosecution of His task. Anything we spend or bear in the uplifting of men is, in its measure, a 'filling up of that which is lacking of the sufferings of Christ'; and if we believe in His Divinity, this thought of 'filling up' should make us hopeful in all our efforts. If the work is His it cannot finally be defeated, for 'He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.'

[1] J. Wesley Bready, *Lord Shaftesbury*, 124.
[2] S. H. Hadley, *Down in Water Street*, 702.

O brother man! fold to thy heart thy brother;
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there;
To worship rightly is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of Him whose holy work was 'doing good';
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.

Then shall all shackles fall; the stormy clangour
Of wild war music o'er the earth shall cease;
Love shall tread out the baleful fire of anger,
And in its ashes plant the tree of peace![1]

[1] Whittier.

The Seal of the Charter

1 Cor. ix. 1.—'Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?'

St Paul is evidently on the defensive. His opponents have been casting doubts on the validity of his apostolate. In the judgment of the advocates of external order and precedents he was at a great disadvantage as compared with the original Apostles. He had not kept company with the Lord in the days of His flesh, nor had he been present when the Holy Ghost was given to the Church.

So much was true, but the Apostle appealed to an experience of his own. Did they doubt the validity of his ministry, his right to preach with authority the gospel that went out from his lips? His answer was this—he had seen Jesus.

Not many years before he wrote this letter the Jewish leaders believed they had broken in good time a movement that seemed to have in it some danger. But soon those same men of high degree were disturbed again. The followers of the Nazarene had rallied. They said their Master was alive again and had spoken to them. The people listened to them. What should be done? Well, well, let it die a natural death. But it refused to die, so tolerance gave place to warnings, threatenings, imprisonments, scourgings, deaths.

A man of strangely engaging character was the first to die. His name was Stephen. They dragged him out and flung great stones at him and left him on the soiled earth with the life battered out of him. Another young man saw him die. Saul had come many hundreds of miles from his home in Tarsus to Jerusalem. His parents were Jews who had sent their lad to the city of his dreams to become learned in their religion, and he had flung himself into his religion with a fierce eagerness. Of all the Jews none was more zealous. He joined the strictest sect and was proud of it. With what fury he hated this story of the Nazarene, that challenging religion, those unlearned followers. They must be destroyed. Then he saw Stephen die. He had never seen death like this. This man died with light in his eyes, and a face like an angel's. He went away thinking, unsettled. Then it came to him that this power of the new religion to unsettle a faith like his was but another proof that it was an evil thing. There could be no half-measures with it. The first must be stamped out at any cost, and he would help to do it.

He took up the persecution of the new sect with all his power. He breathed threatenings and slaughters as a dragon breathes flame; he tells us so himself. And one red-letter day, armed with all authority, he sets out for Damascus to grapple the evil there. He tramples on every feeling of pity in his soul, and with a grim resolve he goes on his way.

But suddenly at the height of day something happens. He sees a light. He hears a voice. He is blinded and has to be led into Damascus. The blindness passes, but his prey have nothing to fear from him now. The whole way of his life is turned. He joins the company of the Nazarene. He becomes their leader. He goes from town to town teaching and inspiring them. They learn to trust him, and at length discover what God had made plain to him long ago, that he was to be God's choice man to carry that hated gospel to lands that had not heard it. They saw him out on his perilous task. On and on he goes, over seas and mountains and plains, through triumphs and defeats, in sunny market-places, in gloomy jails, everywhere preaching the Christian faith. He is beaten with rods. He, too, is stoned like Stephen and left for dead. Nowhere in history can a story of more splendid courage than Paul's be found. And his intellect matches his temper for its daring and magnificence. In those years of peril and labour he pours a stream of letters, of which some remain with us still, in which the intellect of man still finds new depths to fathom, and a light that has brought glory to the darkest haunts of the world.

When this Paul is challenged by foe or friend he goes back to that noonday. The secret and the authority are there. He tells the mob in Jerusalem. He tells King Agrippa. No doubt he told it in every city and ship where he found himself, that every Church he helped to create knew it by heart, and that at the last he told it again to his judges in Rome. 'Have I not seen Jesus?' That was all. It was enough.

¶ Browning one day was telling certain people that he had once met Shelley. 'And what else?' they asked, tiring of that subject, and passing on to others, 'what else happened to you on that outing?' 'What else?' he cried, taken aback, 'I tell you I saw Shelley, and, of course, in view of that, everything else that day just faded from my mind.'[1]

What is the meaning of this story?

1. Paul says it meant that Jesus Christ lives, and lives in a life of fuller power to bless men than that He knew in the days of His flesh. It is idle to discuss the happening as a psychological phenomenon, a rising up of the real Saul. He probably knew more about himself than we know, and if there is one thing he makes plain it is that Saul never explains Paul. Saul was a Jew who believed that any who died on a cross was accursed, under the ban of God.

¶ We do not understand what 'cursed' meant to the Jew. We do not feel the bite of it. But the Jew understood it, and felt the power of it. There was a Jewish saying that Abraham was accustomed to sit at the mouth of hell in order to prevent any of his descendants from passing to that place of torment. But if any one of his descendants was 'cursed,' then Abraham could do nothing. He had simply to stand aside and let him pass to his own place.[2]

Saul may have believed in immortality, but not in a risen life like that of Christ. He says that when Christ laid hold of him it was as if He had been waiting for him in ambush, and

[1] A. J. Gossip, *The Galilean Accent*, 63.
[2] *The Local Colour of the Bible*, Vol. iii, 155.

in that moment had leaped out on him and seized him and compelled him to lower Saul's colours and yield up Saul's sword. He was 'apprehended' of Christ Jesus.

The hallucination of a visionary and possibly an epileptic—a modern scepticism this, which leaves us with a bigger problem of unbelief than the problem of belief. For where shall we find a story of another epileptic to match it, of a vision and a delusion in an abnormal state being the very basis of the whole life of a man in his days of strength when a mighty reason has full play to question and to doubt? Paul's own explanation is the simplest—that he saw Jesus.

And if we add the testimony of the heroes of faith his explanation becomes the only credible one. The early Church with its strange power built itself on this faith. The Fathers of the Church attest their experience and belief, and they were not ineffective visionaries. Luther knows that old Martin Luther is dead, but 'Jesus Christ lives here.' And it has been borne in upon innumerable quiet, hard-working, hard-headed men and women as they reviewed their experience that Jesus Christ was there, a living, life-giving Lord.

¶ Years ago a book was written by Guy Thorne entitled *When It Was Dark*. It is a story based upon the reputed discovery of the tomb in which Jesus had been buried. In the tomb a tablet was discovered with the inscription, 'I, Joseph of Arimathæa, stole the body of Jesus from the tomb, and hid it.' Gradually the faith of men in the Resurrection failed and darkness fell upon the world. The hope of immortality vanished like the fabric of a dream and in its place hopelessness and despair took up their abode. The heroine of the book, however, is a Christian woman who refused to believe the evidence because in her own heart she knew the presence of the living Christ, and through all the darkness she held to the fact of her own experience. She knew that her Redeemer lived, and at last her faith triumphed when the deception was revealed and the fiction made plain.[1]

It is significant that Paul makes so much of this experience. Life would have been easier for him if he had let it go. The message of the Resurrection was a great difficulty, a stumbling block, but he dared not be silent upon it. To Paul it was the vindication of God, of Jesus, of the goodness of the universe. If the story of Jesus had ended at Calvary, after such a life, what could be made of a God who left it at that?

If there was no word after the Cross, then Jesus was simply wrong. He had struck His blow in a hopeless cause. The universe was against Him. But if Jesus lived! Why, then the universe was on love's side, and its God was a God of love, and Jesus was right. And all of this and more was wrapped up in Paul's certainty, 'I have seen Jesus.'

2. It meant that he had a Friend. Those men are few who at some point in life do not long for a friend, one who will stand by when the way is rough and dark. Paul had found one. That night when the gale drove his ship on Malta he found 'the Lord stood by me.' Many a man in storm and wreck has sought one who stood by, and has found Him. No gospel of Paul, no effective Christianity, ever could be without that Living Christ. Paul based himself upon the faith born in that experience. Thus he came to be the Paul we know. At his side in need and in loneliness was Christ. Behind him as he preached was Christ.

¶ When Allenby presented the demand of the British Government to the Egyptian Government he went as a man of peace, without uniform. But he took a squadron of cavalry, who gave him the Royal Salute as he entered the Government buildings and again when he left. The Egyptians knew what he meant. He came as a man of peace but with authority. They knew, the world knew, above all Lord Allenby knew, that behind him was the whole might of the British Empire. The Egyptian Government gave in.

When Paul preached he knew that behind him was the whole power of the whole universe. He did not speak for Paul, but for Christ, in whom was summed up the love and power of God in the death of Calvary and the Resurrection of Easter morning. So he prevailed.

It is useless to repeat, 'I believe in . . . Jesus Christ . . . our Lord . . . He rose again from the dead,' if men do not build their lives upon it. But what that belief, held and trusted, has made of men history will show to any man who seeks. It made Paul. 'Unto me who am less than the least of the saints was this grace given that I' (such a man as I, do not fail to mark that) 'should preach to the

[1] H. T. Kerr, *The Gospel in Modern Poetry*, 34.

Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,' and it grew out of this, 'I have seen Jesus.'

¶ Stanley Weyman in *Queen's Folly* introduces us to a sea-captain of Nelson's time, and makes him speak of his hero:

'Yes, I've seen him,' the Captain admitted, reluctantly as it seemed. 'Nothing to see! A little chap, light in the waist and thin as a curl-paper. Nothing to look at and mild as milk, God bless you. One arm, one eye, about half a man, and sick as a three-months-old puppy when there's a breeze. Weighs about half a ship's boy. But in action, when the bulkheads are down and the linstocks are lighted, then, ma'am——'

He paused so long that Rachel said, 'Yes?'

'A flame of fire.'[1]

Inner Necessity

1 Cor. ix. 16.—'For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!'

In the preface to one of his romances Victor Hugo tells his readers that, while exploring the cathedral of Notre Dame, in Paris, he found in a dark corner of one of the towers a single Greek word—the word for necessity—cut in rude letters on the mouldering wall. Plainly there was some story connected with this inscription, but what that story may have had to reveal he was never able to discover.

Partly for this reason, perhaps, Hugo's imagination was powerfully stirred by this unsolved mystery and the word sank into the fertile mind of the poet like a seed, and brought forth fruit in abundance.

In the words of our text St Paul tells us of the imperious necessity that was laid on him. Was the constraint external or inward? A great purpose may be expressed in either of two ways—by the formula of an external command, or by an inner necessity of the soul. In the case of the Apostle we see a man who is being urged forward by something more than a word of command; he is being urged by the living hands of Christ. The Pharisee has become a cosmopolitan; the pupil of Gamaliel is a wandering evangelist. The man who has seen his universe in Christ's face is now the captive of an inner necessity which drives him on to sacrifice and ignominy and martyrdom, and so to the perfect apprehension of Jesus and to the breast of God. May we not then, in this man's inner constraint, read the inevitable mission of the Christian Church?

¶ When we are told that India produces her great men, Gandhi and Tagore, and that it is therefore impertinent to go to the East, we reply thanking God for the greatness of these sons of India; we are proud of them and grateful for them, and grateful also for the part that Jesus is having in moulding them into greatness.

As for the 'Great Commission' being an interpolation, we reply that this has not yet been proved; but even if it were, we would still be committed to this whole enterprise of sharing Him with the world, for it is not based on a command, but upon the very nature of the gospel itself, upon Him. Last command or no last command, we must share Him, for the necessities of human life command us to give a Saviour such as Jesus. Out of the deep necessities comes the imperious voice, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel.' If we hold our peace, the stones—the hard, bare facts of life—will cry out.[1]

Let us look at some of the outstanding forces straining within this necessity.

1. Amongst the elements of this necessity the first is *the supremacy of Jesus Christ.* It was not only that Paul found himself with Christ in a new moral climate. There was more than that in Paul's discovery. For him Jesus stood at the centre of things. He had no sooner seen Jesus than he knew that the sacrifice of Jesus, white to its very core with the sanctity of love, had sunk to the deepest abysses of his need with healing and forgiveness. And then Paul, the Christian, makes great demands. He demands a life transformed—it is already being transformed in Jesus; he demands the reorganization of the world—he catches sight of the hands of Jesus already at work; he demands an immortal promise for his own new-springing hopes, and the house not made with hands becomes a luminous certainty in the risen Jesus. For Paul, Christ was everywhere present, in the faintest cry of his own heart, and present to the bounds of the world, everywhere inescapable and everywhere supreme.

Now in our day, when missionary operations

[1] M. E. Aubrey, in *Easter Sermons*, 13.

[1] E. Stanley Jones, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, 67.

have become so complex and so vast, we ought to welcome all kinds of criticism. The criticism of *missionary methods* is always legitimate. Paul's methods possibly became a matter of controversy after he separated from Barnabas. The gross offender at Corinth might well afford excellent polemical material for the gainsayers of the time. The open scandal was a target for the scorn of all right-minded men. Paul's own character, we know, was most shamefully traduced, and he followed the course every honourable man would take when he offered so noble and so hot a defence. But through all these obstacles one thing Paul would never admit to be for a moment in dispute—namely, the supremacy of Jesus.

The honour of Jesus is not in dispute, and we decline to bring it into controversy with people who neither know nor wish to know that the supremacy of Jesus is the desperate necessity that drives us on, so that we can do no other. For us, as for the Apostle, the truth that governs conscience, the truth that lies at the heart of God's eternal laws, is summed up in the supremacy of Jesus. For us, as for Paul, love human or love Divine, love that sanctifies sorrow and makes joy perfect, love that finds its source and its law and its mission in the heart of God, that love is expressed in the supremacy of Jesus. He was present at the inception of all things. He will be present at the consummation of all things. This world has given Him its choicest but most terrible gift, a crown of thorns, for He was made like unto His brethren although He stood as they could not at the confluence of our sorrows and our sins. Supreme in suffering, He is supreme in understanding. Supreme in His deity, He is supreme in His authority.

2. A second element is found in *the unity of the race.* There cannot be many more absorbing studies than the study of that mind which first, with perfectly clear and singularly unprejudiced eyes, saw the purpose of God in Jesus Christ, departing on its mission by all the roads that lead to the human heart. For in spite of all the prophets had done to lift morality and the idea of God above the bounds of national privilege, in spite even of the catholicity of Jesus, it was far from easy at the first to see that the promise of the gospel must run out shining towards the West, absolutely unimpeded by any ancient privilege or ceremonial. And herein is something almost tragic in this man's life, that he who seemed incorporate with Israel so that he was willing to be set at nought and be accursed if only his race might be saved; that this man seems to be forced by the gainsaying of his own people to turn to the Gentiles. Nothing could have helped Paul more than this, if he could have started upon his mission to the Gentiles from a broad basis of Christian faith and purpose among his own people. But necessity was laid upon him. He who was willing to die for his own people has to live for the Gentiles. The unity of the race demanded it of him, and the unity of the race at its deepest is not a unity of blood at all, it is a unity of need and of common right. Whether or no any of the disciples of Jesus understood the significance of that request of the Greeks that they might see Jesus, we may be certain of this, that Paul had no sooner looked on the supremacy of Jesus than he saw Greek and barbarian, bond and free the wide world over, wistfully stretching out their hands towards Judea.

From that same necessity we cannot escape. It is certain that we also should be very greatly helped in expressing the evangel if we had more success in our own lands in building up a Christian civilization and in producing the matured truth of Christian character. And to some of us the social reconstruction of our national life, and every step taken towards international peace, are tasks of unspeakable urgency for the healing of our own hurt and also for the moral backing that such triumphs would give to the avowal of Christ among all the nations. But we dare not confine ourselves to our own nation. We are all, for better or worse, in the stream of a common life. The world is economically one to-day, as it has always been socially and spiritually one.

¶ A young Chinese student who sat at my table not long ago when asked his impressions of a great conference of students from which he had just returned answered: 'It meant very much to all of us, students from foreign countries, to see there a great company of young American Christians thoroughly in earnest in their devotion to the cause of Christ. You know in China the Christians are all very much in earnest, but when we come to this Christian country we do not always find the

spirit of Christ triumphant, or even recognized, and it troubles us.' [1]

If only we could read with prophetic eyes the days in which we live, we might discover that the conflict of forces in the world to-day, the lifting here and there of a hope from the shadow of the dawn, the quivering consciousness of Eastern people, and the impact of nation on nation, mean but one thing, that Jesus Christ is abroad disposing the nations about Him in unity of hope and service, making straight for the centre and for an imperial sovereignty over life. It is not idle fancy that suggests that as a reading of the situation. The evidence is growing that Jesus Christ is getting nearer the centre of the race.

3. A third element is found in the demands of *a vital Christian personality.* We are surely not mistaken in regarding Paul as the first great typical Christian soul who realized the content of a full-grown Christian personality, and set that in relation to the whole economy of God's purpose. He says 'Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel.' Is it disobedience to a formal command that he dreads? There is far more than that. He rather dreads complete treachery to the Divine intention, and the consequent and hopeless disintegration of his own Christian personality which such disobedience would involve. Three things at least were startlingly clear to Paul. First, that if he could not pay an atom of his hopeless and glorious debt to Jesus Christ, he could at all events try to tell others what the debt was. In the second place, he felt that if he could do little enough in himself, he could at all events take his place in God's mighty purpose and become a unit in His plan. And in the third place he knew that if He could not see save through a glass darkly, he could at all events seek to answer Christ's prayer for His disciples, 'that they may be with me where I am,' by identifying himself completely with the Spirit of Jesus. Paul felt he might aim at that by being with Jesus where the battle was fiercest, where the work was most heroic. Just as certainly as Christ's supremacy, as certainly as the unity of the race, so certainly did the claims of Christian personality, and therefore the full meaning and bearing of the gospel, lay its stern but glorious necessity on this man's heart.

[1] A. MacColl, *The Sheer Folly of Preaching*, 196.

¶ Some incidents in missionary history strike the western imagination with pathetic directness. This was so when young Dr Jackson died in Manchuria, after a few months' service, while combating the plague in the post of danger. Shall we ever forget the spectacle of a Chinese viceroy, a pagan if you like, but not so pagan that he could not see the marvellous grace in Jesus; shall we ever forget the spectacle of that viceroy appealing to the spirit of Arthur Jackson to intercede with high heaven on behalf of a plague-stricken province? Even if you stripped it of every element of romance, that incident brings you very close to the central reality of Christian service.[1]

Authority and Freedom

1 Cor. ix. 21.—'As without law . . . but under law to Christ' (R.V.).

That was what his conversion had done for St Paul—it had emancipated him from the bondage and burden of the Law. He realized that in Christ its ceremonial and ritual demands were no longer binding on him. And yet, though he knew himself emancipated from the bondage of the Law of Moses, Paul did not think of himself as autonomous and independent. He was 'without law' so far as the Mosaic legislation was concerned, but he was 'under law to Christ.' What happened on the way to Damascus was that Paul changed authorities and allegiances. He got a new Master. His Master now was not Moses, but Christ.

In all this the Apostle is the type of the Christian man. The Christian man is at once gloriously free, and yet he is under authority. He is 'without law' in the sense that he is lifted clean above all ritual and ceremonial rules, he is lifted above even the standards and maxims of the world; but all the time he is 'under law to Christ.' He is at one and the same time bond and free. He does not recognize the authority of society, but he bows to the authority of Christ.

Now, as we know, it is extremely difficult for us to give the right and exact emphasis to each of two contradictory but really complementary truths. We rush into the falsehood of extremes. We find it difficult almost to the point of impossibility to believe in a

[1] A. Connell, *The Endless Quest*, 297.

freedom which is consistent with authority, and an authority which is indispensable to freedom. We hold to either the one or the other. The Church of Rome, for example, insists on authority and denies freedom.

¶ 'In the midst of our difficulties,' wrote Newman, 'I have one ground of hope, just one stay, but, as I think, a sufficient one. It serves me in the stead of all arguments whatever; it hardens me against criticism; it supports me if I begin to despond; and to it I ever come round. It is the decision of the Holy See; Saint Peter has spoken.'

Protestantism on the other hand emphasizes the claims of the individual conscience as against the authority of the Church. It insists upon freedom, the unshackled mind, the right of private judgment. Protestantism was a challenge to authority and tradition and custom. Luther at Worms saying, 'Here stand I; I can do no other, God help me, Amen,' asserting the rights of his own redeemed experience against the authority of Pope and Cardinals and Councils, incarnates the spirit of Protestantism.

But it is possible that in our Protestant emphasis on freedom we have neglected the complementary principle of authority. For freedom is not the whole story. In Roman Catholic countries it is the truth that where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty that needs emphasizing. But in a country like this, where freedom is a tradition and is in danger of becoming a fetish, it is the other truth, that we are under authority, that there is an authority outside of us which we must reverence and obey, that needs insisting upon. For while authority without freedom may end in mental sloth and intellectual death, freedom without respect for authority and an authority to respect will surely degenerate into licence, and moral and intellectual anarchy.

1. *The Dangers of Freedom.*—In recent years the bounds of human freedom have in every direction been enormously enlarged. We have been passing through an age of emancipation, and, on the whole, this 'emancipation age' has brought benefit to the world. But it has also brought with it great and serious perils. The removal of the ancient authorities by which human life was guided and governed has for multitudes issued in the loss of the sense of authority altogether. The insistent preaching of freedom has made them think that there is no law to be observed, no authority to be reverenced, no master to be obeyed. Liberty is always a perilous boon. Liberty is a great test of character. Liberty in the hands of those who do not know how to use it becomes an instrument for their own hurt. The disintegration of the old authorities has made people think there is over them no authority at all; the freedom conferred upon them they interpret as a freedom without limit. The consequence is, our people are becoming self-willed, petulant, disordered, undisciplined. Burke uttered a great truth when he said, 'Liberty must always be limited in order to be possessed.'

¶ The lack of discipline in modern life is the theme of more than one novelist and dramatist to-day. Let Anton Tchehov's *Cherry Orchard* serve as instance. It is the story of a Russian family who are on the verge of bankruptcy, and the family estate, a cherry orchard, is to be sold over their heads. None of the members has the energy of character to save the situation. Enervation and inaction, love of mere talk, hang like a spell over the household. At last the evil hour comes, and the last word of the play is uttered by an old retainer, who is the only one who has known the meaning of discipline, and has been brought up to admire it. The rooms have been cleared, the house is now destitute. 'We are a job lot! A job lot!'[1]

(1) Take *the home.* We deplore the destruction of the home. We assign all sorts of reasons for it; but unquestionably one of the reasons for the decay of the home and the upspringing of a generation of careless, frivolous, godless men and women is the lack of home discipline. Parental authority has been left unexercised. Children have not been taught the lesson of obedience from their cradle. They have claimed liberty to do what they liked and go where they pleased. Now if the lesson of obedience is not learned in youth it will never be learned, and if we have children who are self-willed and insubordinate, we shall soon have a self-willed and insubordinate people, and that spells in the long run disaster and ruin.

¶ An unchaperoned group of girls, supposedly from 'our best families,' recently went with a

[1] W. E. Rix.

publicly organized party on a European tour. During the entire trip they drank to excess, they smoked to excess, and their personal immodesty became a scandal to the party. They were enjoying a degree of liberty never before accorded to young women, and they were betraying their utter inability to handle it. Granting the social restraints of even a generation ago, those same girls probably would be decent, modest, self-respecting young women. As it is, their lengthened ropes have betrayed their weak stakes and their tents are wildly flapping in the wind.[1]

(2) We see the same menacing sign in *our national life.* There has been of late years a lamentable outbreak of defiance for law and order. People have, as they say, taken the law into their own hands. The rebellious and insubordinate spirit that defies law and mutters treason and indulges in outrage because it cannot get what it wants, is pregnant with disaster to society altogether. It makes social life impossible. Social life is possible only on the principle of give and take. It implies respect for the will of the whole. It involves a certain curtailment of liberty. People who attack law and social order in order to advance causes of their own are doing what blind Samson did: they are pulling down the pillars on which Society rests; and they, as well as their antagonists, will be involved in the ghastly ruin that will ensue.

(3) But the spirit of the time reveals itself in its most perilous form in *the realm of morals and religion.* The human mind has been set free from its ancient allegiances. The old authorities have been challenged and discredited. And with very many the newly gained liberty has degenerated into dangerous licence. Take as an illustration the changed attitude towards the Bible. Fifty years ago the Bible was regarded by most Christian people as an infallible book. Its words were final and binding. But the past fifty years have made a great difference in men's views of the Bible. Two things are mainly accountable for the change—the discoveries of science and the literary criticism of the Bible itself. The discoveries of science have shown us that we cannot claim inerrancy and infallibility for the Bible. The work of the critics has cast a certain amount of doubt upon the authenticity of certain parts of the Bible itself. The result is that multitudes of men have repudiated the authority of the Bible altogether. They have 'emancipated' themselves, they say, from its tyranny. And then these 'emancipated' folk proceed to formulate their own ideas of the whole duty of man. They construct a new morality to take the place of the morality of this old Book. Man's duty, according to the new morality, is not to glorify God, as the old Catechism puts it, but to realize himself. Probe it to the bottom and it is the worship of Egoism writ large. In one aspect of it, it results in the man of iron, as Bernard Shaw calls him—the man who scorns love as a sentimentality, who hardens his heart and marches to his end heedless of what may happen to his fellows.

¶ Lord Birkenhead, it will be remembered, addressing the students of Glasgow University, declared that idealism was dead and bade them sharpen their swords; for the prizes of life, he said, belonged to the nation that had the keenest sword.

On another aspect of it, it results in the repudiation of marriage and the break-up of the family. Our modern civilization is built on the family, and the family, again, is safeguarded by our Lord's austere and holy law of marriage. But now we are told that the whole duty of man is to realize himself, to develop what is in him. And this becomes in the hands of the new moralists practically a plea for the abolition of marriage and the free indulgence of passion. One of the things that menace our life at the present time is the quantity of literature, pervaded by the sex-question, which pours out of our press. It poisons the mind against the restraints of the marriage bond, and makes the love of the family circle the butt of its profane ridicule. The writers may cover up their propaganda with what graces of style they please, but what they call 'liberty' means bestiality and rottenness.

When we turn to the religious sphere we find a similar state of things prevailing. The old religious authorities have been deposed, and no new authority has been instated in their place. We boast of our 'freedom of thought.' We repudiate both Church and Bible. Every man becomes a sort of law to himself. Every man has a kind of special religion of his own.

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *Twelve Tests of Character*, 23.

Every man is his own authority, and makes a god after his own likeness. The result is we have guesses, speculations, queries in abundance, but no authoritative message. And the result again is that the Christian people are hesitant, dubious, bewildered. There is no certitude, no assurance anywhere. And this, again, has issued in weakness and impotence and paralysis. It is always according to our faith, our positive and assured belief, our energy of conviction, that it shall be unto us. We are paying the penalty for our uncertainties and dubieties in our present ineffectiveness.

2. *The Need for Authority.*—What we need for our preservation is the recovery of the lost sense of authority. 'The best recipe for making men,' says Dr Forsyth in a striking phrase, 'is to give them a master.' That is what our age wants—a master. It must learn again how to obey. It must bow again to righteous authority. And the ultimate and final authority is Jesus Christ. He is the One who has the right to rule. He is the One whom the universal conscience recognizes as Lord.

The Bible is not the ultimate authority. It is still the one eternal Book, the authentic word of God to the human soul. But the real authority is not the Bible, but the Christ of whom the Bible speaks. The Lord Jesus is the authority—the Divine and Supernatural Christ who has revealed Himself to and verified Himself in the history of the Church—that mighty and redeeming Lord of whom we can be quite sure because He lives amongst us and does His Divine work upon us to this very day. The Saviour of the soul is the Lord of the soul. The Redeemer of the conscience is Master of the conscience.

Christ is the authority, not conscience. It is a common thing to say that the conscience is the seat of authority. It is not. Conscience is the sphere in which authority is felt. But it is not its source. The authority is not exercised by conscience, it is exercised upon it. Authority is not subjective. It is objective and real. It centres in the Historic Christ—the Crucified and Risen Lord, of whose reality we are quite sure. Conscience is wayward and unstable; Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Here is our Authority—whom it is our business not to criticize, but to obey. He is God manifest in the flesh, and in actual experience He has shown Himself able to redeem men's lives into purity and strength, and to give them light and peace. To reverence His authority is the most crying need of to-day.

(1) It is *the need of the Church.* We have had enough of guesses and amiable speculations. We have pursued will-o'-the-wisps for long enough. Let us get back to Christ, the exalted, living, Divine Christ. Let us bow to His authority, who has been declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. We have been making our own little gospels long enough. Let Him give us His, which is the only valid gospel. We shall soon have an authoritative gospel which will demonstrate its power in the conversion of souls.

(2) It is *the need of the State.* He taught them as one having authority, the crowds said of Him in the ancient days. He exercises the same authority still, and every honest soul admits it. And that is what we need to create social order and justice; that is what we need to put an end to strife and warfare; that is what we need to make England a rejoicing and her people a joy—a new reverence for the authority of Christ.

(3) And that is *what we need as individuals.* The best recipe for the making of men is to give them a master. And the only One who has a right to be Master is Christ. But He has the right. That is the way to nobility and strength and victory, to make Christ Master—to be under law to Christ. The man who lets his own self-will rule him, who surrenders to his own wandering lusts and passions, shall have a portion of shame and everlasting contempt. But the man who brings every thought into subjection to the law of Christ shall go from strength to strength until he appears before God in Zion.

O marts of trade, with all your clang and din,
Pause in your rush for this world's goods and gold,
The things you cherish are but dust and mold—
Swing wide the gate and let your Master in.

O classic halls, where one may learning win,
The magnet that brings near a nation's youth
To lead them in the widening way of truth—
Swing wide the gate and let your Master in.

O palaces of state, where men do bring
Their counsel for the things of peace and war,
Have you no place for this Ambassador?—
Swing wide the gate and let your Master in.

O rebel heart that hast no need of Him,
That go'st thy way so sure in all thy sin,
Shalt thou hold siege in thy Jerusalem?—
Swing wide the gate and let thy Master in.[1]

Christian Opportunism

1 Cor. ix. 22.—'To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.'

'I CONFESS,' says Carlyle, 'I have no notion of a truly great man that could not be *all* sorts of men.' This gift St Paul had received of God—this power of making himself at home with all classes, races, and degrees of men.

1. This was the working principle of Paul's ministry, and also the secret of his success as an apostle of Christ. He states this principle in Romans as a binding duty upon moral strength. 'We then that are strong,' says he, 'ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.' In sympathy and practice Paul shared the weakness of the weak, in order to help and strengthen them. And it was in harmony with this principle the Son of God clothed Himself in human flesh that He might speak to us through human lips and stretch out for our salvation a human hand. And in this way Paul conformed himself to the habits and practice of those he sought to save.

To the Athenians he spoke as a philosopher; among the Jews he acted as a Jew. To the Roman he said, 'I am a Roman; born a Roman citizen. I preach to you an Almighty Cæsar who came to save the world, and will one day rule all the world.' To the slave he said, 'I am a slave of Jesus Christ. I make known to you One who has no respect of persons, and before whom master and servant are equal.' To the free man he said, 'I am Christ's free man. I want to tell you of One whose service is perfect liberty.' To the wise man he spoke: 'In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' To the ignorant he said, 'God hath chosen the foolish things to confound the wise.' To the poor he declared, 'Christ became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich.' To the rich he spoke of the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ.

[1] H. Pressfield.

Effectual Christian service is a difficult and delicate art. No amount of zeal will save us from blundering and failure, unless along with our zeal we possess some of the insight which comes from sympathy with the people we try to help. There are few gifts more necessary, and less common, among Christian workers, than this gift of imaginative sympathy, which can enter by intuition into other men's feelings and appreciate their condition and understand instinctively how to deal with their case. Such a gift depends partly on moral endowment and inheritance. But a sensitive nature may be coarsened and blunted by selfishness, as it may be cultivated by faithful obedience. Thoughtful love grows wise by constant watching, and strengthens by patient self-denial. How few of us attain to the height of George Fox's wonderful petition: 'I have prayed to be baptized into a sense of all conditions, that I might be able to know the needs and feel the sorrows of all.'

¶ In his *Miscellanies* Charles Kingsley speaks of the duty of a poet 'who desires honestly to proclaim great truths. If he has to offend the prejudices of the world in important things, that is all the more reason for his bowing to those prejudices in little things, and being content to be like his neighbours in outward matters, in order that he may make them like himself in inward ones. Shall such a man dare to hinder his own message, to drive away the very hearers to whom he believes himself to be sent, for the sake of his own nerves, laziness, antipathies, much more of his own vanity and pride? If he does so, he is unfaithful to that very genius on which he prides himself. He denies its divinity, by treating it as his own possession, to be displayed or hidden as he chooses, for his own enjoyment, his own glorification. Well for such a man, if a day comes to him in which he will look back with shame and self-reproach, not merely on every scandal which he may have caused by breaking the moral and social laws of humanity, by neglecting to restrain his appetites, pay his bills, and keep his engagements; but also on every conceited word and look, every *gaucherie* and

rudeness, every self-indulgent moroseness and fastidiousness, as sins against the sacred charge which has been committed to him; and determine with that Jew of old, who, to judge from his letter to Philemon, was one of the most perfect gentlemen of God's making who ever walked this earth, to become "all things to all men, if by any means he may save some." '[1]

2. Genuine sympathy is more than a state of mind, a mood of emotion; it is an inward act as well. 'Put yourself in his place,' says the novelist. It is essential that there should be respect for other people's views. Men do not think alike in this world. They cannot. Many may be inclined to regard the results which we have reached through patience and toil and tribulation, not only with opposition, but with resentment; while we in turn may look upon them with contempt because they have not yet caught up with our vision. How poor and mean and petty must they be whose horizon is bounded and circumscribed! Of course the truth is one and clear—easily discerned—and we have it. Nothing but stupidity or obstinacy could prevent anybody from beholding it as well as we. When we give way to our natural impulses we are impatient and intolerant. It is this spirit which has made bitter social and domestic life, and sown the seeds of strife among the nations of mankind.

Before we can effectually succour any other human being, we must to some extent put ourselves in his place; we must enter into his situation and realize his needs. The Old Testament parallel to St Paul's attitude is furnished by the prophet who was sent to the Hebrew captives by the river of Chebar, and there, says Ezekiel, 'I sat where they sat'—a living embodiment of sympathy.

I, too, have passed through that self-same place
Where you and the Dragon are face to face.

I neither vanquished nor slew him quite,
But he fled away with the morning light.

Alas! so deadly the mortal fray,
You cannot hearken the words I say.

And I, who remember the combat sore,
Weep. I have passed that way before.[2]

[1] *The Expositor*, August 1925, p. 130.
[2] Margaret Blaikie, *Songs by the Way*, 46.

3. St Paul's sympathy, even with his opponents, his great tenderness for the bigoted, the scrupulous, the superstitious, are the more remarkable in a man of such deep, strong, definite convictions. Assuredly he never accepted the hateful maxim that to understand everything is to condone everything. No one held more tenaciously to the sacredness of principle and the certainty of truth. Yet he would go almost any lengths, short of compromising principle, if by any means he might win over his antagonists. In particular he was ready to waive his own personal rights and to sacrifice his individual liberties in all matters that did not involve evil, on the chance that by so doing he might influence some soul for good.

The words 'all things to all men' have been quoted and used a thousand times unworthily, falsely, and meanly. They are the boast of the time-server and the excuse of the coward. They express a philosophy of life which has no sense of honour, which finds no room for convictions, which sacrifices higher things for ease or gain.

¶ We quote St Paul when he talked of making himself all things to all men, and of becoming to the Jews a Jew and as without the Law to the heathen. But then we do so with a view to justifying ourselves for leaving the Jew to remain a Jew, and the heathen to remain heathen. . . . There is, as anybody can see, a whole world of difference between the reserve of sagacious apostleship, on the one hand, dealing tenderly with scruple and fearfulness and fine sensibility of conscience, and the reserve of intellectual cowardice on the other hand, dealing hypocritically with narrow minds in the supposed interests of social peace and quietness.[1]

We cannot too often remind ourselves of the powerful motive which prompted and controlled the actions of the Apostle. His was no mere natural sympathy run wild. His motive was not, 'That I may be agreeable to all the world,' but that 'I may by all means save some'—save them from the sin which besets them; save them by bringing them into living communion with the Almighty and Crucified Saviour. Not 'all'—that were too much to hope—but 'some.' Thus, while Paul's heart is on fire his reason is cool; after all this expenditure of feeling and effort he looks for partial results. But whether among scholars or the unlettered; whether

[1] J. Morley, *On Compromise*.

amidst friends or foes; whether he stands face to face with multitudes or is pleading with a single soul, he keeps one purpose steadily before him—that some at least may know the power of the faithful saying that 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.'

St Paul had drunk deeply of his Master's spirit. May we not say of Christ that He became all things to all men that He might win them for His own? When He stooped to visit and redeem mankind, He sat where they sat. Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He likewise Himself also took part in the same. His name was called Emmanuel, and He shared the common lot. In this world of toil He laboured, working with His own hands. In this world of trial and sorrow He was acquainted with grief, being in all points tempted like as we are. The Good Shepherd Himself became as one lost in the wilderness, that He might bring home His sheep that had gone astray. To the Jews He became as a Jew; to them that are under the law, as under the law. By the grace of God, He tasted death for every man; and the kingdom and the power and the glory are His own for ever.

The Race Set Before Us

1 Cor. ix. 24.—'Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.'

THE reference is to the famous Greek athletic contests known as the Isthmian Games, so called because they were held in the Isthmus of Corinth. Naturally, in a letter addressed to the Christian Church at Corinth, Paul might very well allude to the institution which above all others held a place in popular esteem at that period. If he were writing to inhabitants of London to-day he might draw his illustration from the aerodrome at Hendon or the motor-racing track at Brooklands. Sir Alan Cobham's wonderful flight to Australia might come in for mention. If the football season were at its height he might say something about the immense concourse of people drawn together to witness a cup-tie match between two splendidly trained opposing teams. But, in truth, great as is our national interest in sport, none of these means as much to England as the Isthmian Games used to mean to Greece. There was the keenest rivalry between one city and another as to which could produce the finest athletes. No one was allowed to contend in the arena unless he could furnish evidence of having undergone a thorough course of discipline in preparation for it; if he could not pass this test, he was rejected. When the great day came the athlete who was counted worthy wrestled, fought, and raced under the gaze of the victors in previous contests, who sat in elevated seats of honour looking down upon him. If he won, he was crowned with laurel and borne home in triumph. Poets composed special odes in celebration of his deeds; his family and his native place shared in the glory henceforth attaching to his name; and he was privileged on future occasions to take his place amongst the illustrious champions of former days, to whom special reverence was always accorded, and whose presence at the great games at once awed and exhilarated younger generations of aspirants for distinction and stimulated them to put forth their best powers. The Apostle has all this in mind as he writes, and gives it a spiritual application. 'Know ye not,' he says, 'that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain.' That is, though only one can obtain the prize in the Greek games, all may obtain the spiritual prize, 'the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,' who are sufficiently in earnest to run the Christian race to the end.

1. So to run that we may obtain the recompense of the reward, it is necessary that we have *a clear conception of what we run for.* The Apostle had a distinct aim, a definite creed; he saw clearly in what the grand prize of life lay, and the clear path to the goal: 'I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.' He knew what he was about; his purpose and plan were clearly defined. So if we are to run well we must clearly discern the prize and be assured of its reality and sufficiency. What, then, is the prize of life, the supreme garland on which we must fix our eye? It is the perfection of our highest nature, our immortal perfection.

¶ In his *Christian Perfection,* Law takes us into a strait gate indeed, and leads us along a narrow way; but what of that when every step of the way rewards us with new liberty and with a nobler prospect, till he lands us at last without

spot or blemish before the throne of God. In this, as in all his practical books, Law cuts to the bone. He seizes and holds all the defiles and dark passes of the heart. When John Wesley on one occasion complained to Law that his doctrine of Christian perfection was too high to be attainable, Law replied, 'We shall do well to aim at the highest degree of perfection if we may thereby at least attain to mediocrity.' [1]

(1) *The perfection of our highest nature.*—The Greeks held forth splendid prizes for physical perfection, and this perfection they passionately coveted and made the greatest sacrifices to reach. They had also famous competitions in which the most gifted men strove for intellectual masteries; competitors were crowned for excellence in oratory, music, poetry, and painting. Here practically and substantially the Greeks end; and where they end Christianity begins. The New Testament has nothing to urge against physical discipline, and it never discredits scholarship; but Christ came to teach that there is a grander prize than physical or mental perfection—the perfection of the moral man—the training of the conscience, the affections, and the will until we reach the glory of the noblest righteousness. Many are the legitimate prizes of life, but the chief prize lies in bringing to perfection the soul itself—the strength, purity, and beauty of the inward man.

(2) This personal, moral perfection implies *our immortal perfection.* How swiftly physical perfection passes! The strength and grace of the form, the acuteness of the senses, the completeness and balance of all the organs, the serene pleasantness arising from the perfect health of the whole organism, exist only for the shortest season; they are gone like a dream. And our mental vigour does not last. As people advance in years they are apt to boast the undecaying vigour of their intellectual faculties—they find their memory as retentive, their imagination as fertile, and their power of expression and work as good as ever, better indeed. And their children and friends smile pathetically.

But the noble conscience, the purged affections, and the spiritual will are for ever: this is the inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

2. To run successfully the race of life we must have *a lively hope of getting what we run for.* Each competitor cherished some hope of winning the prize. And if we are to overcome in the great endeavour of life we must have good grounds to believe that we shall get the coveted things for which we make great exertions and sacrifices.

(1) *The sanctification of our own life.*—It is the conclusion of many that our present worldly circumstances forbid perfection of life; if our surroundings were happy we might expect far higher attainments, but the unpropitiousness of our lot forbids the hope of an ideal perfection. Others hold that our constitutional faults preclude perfection. The teaching of the New Testament is, however, very clear: everywhere it insists on raiment whiter than snow. The grace of Christ brings with it an interior power that dispossesses constitutional faults, that defies uncongenial circumstances, and that realizes a perfection of heart and life beyond the thought of the natural man. Plato believed in moral beauty for a few aristocratic souls: Jesus Christ brings that beauty to the man in the street. Now, if we are to attain high character we must believe in high character, for we shall hardly rise much beyond that in which we believe. We are not likely to put forth great efforts or to make serious sacrifices to reach a phantom crown which dangles tantalizingly in the mist. We must have good hope of getting a thing if we are to put forth all our power in its pursuit. Let us cherish a great faith in the possibilities of character under the mighty power of the Holy Spirit. We are poor enough creatures as we stand alone, but through the power of the Spirit we are capable of the fairest life and the grandest doing.

¶ When Lincoln died, Tolstoi, looking across from Russia, said: 'He was a Christ in miniature.' That is what we are all meant to be. And He can do that for us, if we let Him.

(2) *The certainty of immortal perfection.*—When an athletic contest is to be decided, no uncertainty prevails as to the nature and reality of the prize. The gold cup or the medal is exhibited in the jeweller's window. The prize is there, tangible, indisputable, to allure and inspire the candidates. And our faith in the prize of eternity must be equally assured. The Apostle was as sure of everlasting life as he was of this life, and we must

[1] Alexander Whyte, *Thirteen Appreciations*, 207.

share his faith if we are to put forth all our strength in the struggle. Not one who sincerely sighs and strives after the fullness of love and righteousness shall fail. Only few can win earth's prizes of gold and laurel, but the richest of all rewards is sure to every patient soul.

3. To run successfully the race of life we must exercise *the utmost determination and discipline.* 'Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.' As the athlete concentrates himself on the race, so must we concentrate ourselves on the work of our sanctification. If we carefully note the whole of this chapter we shall discover two directions in which discipline is called for.

(1) We must *deny our lower nature for the sake of the higher.* The Apostle keeps under his body, he is wary of self-indulgence. Such indulgence may come in the form of ignoble ease. It may come in the guise of pleasure. Or we may be lured by covetousness: Atalanta stooping to pick up the golden apples lost the race, and a greater race is often lost through yielding to temptations of wealth, fashion, and pleasure. By denying the body the Greeks realized the body, they tempered it to its full perfection of strength and loveliness, of fleetness, suppleness, and vision; and by denying ourselves in lower and lesser things we secure the full glory of our being. If the spirit of a man's life is really worthy, every day will see him raised, his diviner self will shine out, a hundred little unremembered acts will refine and exalt him; but if, on the contrary, the aim be not really sincere and high, he is being continuously, although it may be insensibly, degraded. The secret of success is habitually to give the higher the preference.

(2) We must *deny ourselves for the sake of others.* The reading of this chapter makes the duty of such unselfishness very clear. In the ordinary race jealousy of one's rivals prevails, there is decidedly no effort on our part to help them. It would be a strange sight to see the Oxford crew assisting Cambridge to a fresh oar in the place of one they had broken. In the very nature of physical contests such things cannot be; but in human life it is of the very essence of success that we are helpers of one another's joy, that the strong aid the weak, the wise counsel the inexperienced, the pure lift up the fallen; and the more sincerely and vehemently we deny ourselves to save others the swifter are our steps and the brighter our diadem.

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

Temperance

1 Cor. ix. 25.—'And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.'

THE self-restraint, the obedience to law, the sacrifice of pleasure for an end, the unbroken perseverance, the mastery of self, were the powers which earned, more even than the attained palm, the approval and honour of philosophic Greece. And these were all embodied in one virtue, the virtue of temperance, the virtue which in all the spheres of human effort, physical, moral, artistic, and intellectual, was among the wiser Greeks the greatest. And, because of the obedience given to it, it happened that the Greeks became, while they obeyed it, the masters of the world in all the arts of life and in the art of living.

With this thought they had filled the ancient society; and when its influence decayed, that society broke to pieces, and its arts fell headlong into corruption. But still, enough of the old teaching remained in St Paul's time to seize on his mind, searching into all that was good in pagan life; enough remained to make him select that element of temperance out of paganism for absorption into Christianity; enough remained to give his comparison weight among his audience. Again and again, and especially in this passage, he claims temperance as a Christian virtue; and so it is. But, in one sense, it stands alone. It is not only a virtue in itself; it is also the guard and girdle —as Ruskin calls it—of all the other virtues. It is, as it were, the Cestus which clasps together the full drapery of each virtue and prevents it from flying to the winds of either extreme; which keeps its folds together; binds it into grave harmonies; retains it in its place; fits

it tightly to the figure of each act; and makes the virtue itself, by such noble restraint of its forms, beautiful in the eyes of men. Each virtue needs this virtue, as every robe needs its girdle.

It was the right of St Paul to claim it as Christian, for it was the ruler of the life of Jesus. We see its power in the silent thirty years of Nazareth. Not till He knew what He was, not till His ideas and their form were clearly grasped, did He come forth to live openly in the sight of men. And when He came, it was His self-restraint, and the resolution to develop His ideas temperately that were tempted. 'Be quick,' said the voice of the Jewish world, which He interpreted as the voice of the devil—'Seize on your kingdom at once, snatch your day!' And He answered 'No' to all. With the negative He accepted the temperate life, the life of the noiseless worker whose voice was not heard in the streets; the career of one who kept at bay immoderate desires, display, force, fame, all wild excitement. If He should inherit the earth it would be through meekness; if He should make the Kingdom, it would be through humbleness of spirit; if He should be master of the human heart, it would be through the self-restraint of love. Temperate in all the work of life, self-controlled, bound in every action, every speech, by the rule of His ideas, sacrificing everything to them—He lived in self-mastery. Therefore He mastered men and won an immortal end. 'It is finished,' was a word in which the triumph of this temperance was concentrated and declared.

'Twas thus He suffered, though a Son,
Foreknowing, choosing, feeling all;
Until the perfect work was done,
And drunk the bitter cup of gall.

It was owing to temperance that certain deep impressions have been made upon the world by the life of Jesus—the impressions of *unity*, *intensity*, *power*, and *peace*.

1. Jesus raised *unity* into the dominant principle of the temperate life. It was to be lived, not only for the purpose of being beautiful, or in harmony according to the Greek ideal, not only for self-development or self-power—but chiefly to reveal what was the life which would make other men happy. Its only true motive was the love of the human race. And this should be our motive; not self-training, nor striving for the mastery in order to develop or save oneself, but temperance in all things in order to be able to live in love of men, in order to save others. Without that aim the moral life ends in selfishness, the temperate life in pride. With that aim it ends in self-forgetfulness and in humility. And it is this aim which alone will secure that the impression made by the life will be one—and permanent. If while we live our moral life we are thinking of ourselves, we give the world a divided impression—an impression of moral temperance, but also an impression of self-righteousness.

¶ Dr Alexander Francis has recorded how while he was resident in Russia a certain 'social worker' from Chicago begged to be introduced to Tolstoi. At their interview the American described his methods of rescue work in the slums of that wicked city: 'We go down to the drunkards and harlots and try to pull them up to the rock on which we stand.' And then, continues Dr Francis, 'the storm that I had seen gathering burst upon the astonished man. "You miserable creature," said Tolstoi, more in sorrow than in anger, "do you know that your heart is full of Pharisaic pride, and that it was upon such sins of the spirit and not on sins of the flesh that He whom you call Lord and Master poured the vials of His wrath? Will no one organize a mission of drunkards and harlots to save the souls of those who, by their secret sins of swelling pride and petty meanness, by their bitter jealousies and narrow sectarianism, are kept out of the Kingdom into which the open sinners enter, saved as by fire, yet saved by the grace of Christ in them, manifesting itself in the humility, the charity, and the self-loathing of their hearts?"'[1]

It is different when the temperate life springs from love. It has then one motive; and that motive is so powerful, and so all-embracing, that it alone remains one individual influence on the hearts of men. Love catches hold of them. They feel, as they look, as if the sunlight that makes all things beautiful was pouring into them from this attractive life. They say, 'This was a brother; he did not stand apart; my sin and failure did not make him shrink from me, but drew him closer to

[1] T. H. Darlow, *The Love of God*, 199.

my side. He gave himself for all he met, he lived, he suffered, he bore all sorrows and conquered all temptations, he controlled his whole life, for the sake of giving some happiness and peace to men, women, and children who were poor and sad and ill at ease, and troubled with sin. He did not care whether the world thought him good or bad, he cared only to do all things for Love. For that he sacrificed even the good repute of the moral and the religious world. We see only one thing in him—one Divine and beautiful thing by which all his life is harmonized—unbroken unity of Love.'

Christ of Judea, look Thou in my heart:
Do I not love Thee, look to Thee, in Thee
Alone have faith of all the sons of men,
Faith deepening with the weight and woe of years?

Pure soul and tenderest of all that came
Into this world of sorrow, hear my prayer:
Lead me, yes, lead me deeper into life—
This suffering human life wherein Thou liv'st
And breath'st still, and hold'st Thy way divine.

'Tis here, O pitying Christ, where Thee I seek,
Here where the strife is fiercest; where the sun
Beats down upon the highway thronged with men,
And in the raging mart. Oh! deeper lead
My soul into the living world of souls
Where Thou dost move.[1]

2. The second impression made was *intensity*. Men think there is no room for passion in the temperate life; and were it so, it would be unfortunate, because all fine work needs intensity of feeling. But it is not so. There is no need to limit or restrain that love of others which is the root of the temperate life. The more of this love the better. There is satiety of all things which belong to love of self; there is none in our love of others. Were that possible, God Himself, who lives for ever, might be afflicted with satiety.

¶ What was the secret of Spurgeon's success as an evangelist? 'It is admitted,' says Mr Boreham, 'that there is scarcely one respect in which Mr Spurgeon's powers were really transcendent. The truth probably is that, although he attained to superexcellence at no point, he was really great at many. And behind this extraordinary combination of remarkable though not transcendent powers was a deadly earnestness, a consuming passion, that made second-rate qualities sublime.' Here, for instance, is the record of a day:[1] 'Leaving home early in the morning, I went to the chapel, and sat there all day long, seeing those who had been brought to Christ by the preaching of the Word. Their stories were so interesting to me that the hours flew by without my noticing how fast they were going. I may have seen some thirty or more persons during the day, one after the other, and I was so delighted with the tales of mercy they had to tell me, and the wonders of grace God had wrought in them, that I did not know anything about how the time passed. At seven o'clock we had our prayer meeting. I went in and prayed with the brethren. After that came the Church Meeting. A little before ten I felt faint, and I began to think at what hour I had my dinner, and I then for the first time remembered that I had not had any! I never thought of it. I never even felt hungry, because God had made me so glad.'

3. The third impression was *power*. The practice of temperance for the sake of love does not lessen, but increases intensity. There is a false passion in violence, and it is doomed to exhaustion. But the passion which is never allowed by temperance to pass beyond the point at which it consumes itself is always retained at white heat. It retains power, and in its temperance is hid its power.

4. Lastly, it is this consistent government, this subordination, by temperance, of all the powers of our nature within their limits, so that each has its value for the sake of the whole being, and all are directed by one will to one end, the healing of mankind as the child of God—it is this that brings *peace* into life, that peace for which we crave so bitterly, and most bitterly when our self-indulgence has brought us peacelessness.

Peace will be ours only when we have mastered self-desires for the sake of love; when, in temperate government of the soul by One Law of Love, we have won the self-forgetfulness of Jesus Christ. Then the soul—having unity in its diversity, having passion subdued to whiteness of flame by self-control,

[1] R. W. Gilder.

[1] W. Y. Fullerton, *C. H. Spurgeon*, 375.

having power because all its qualities radiate to one point where burns the Love of God for man—His child—has peace within, deep as the seas of eternity. The aim of life is One; and the impression made by life is One. We are not only at peace. We bring peace. We have sown it; it is our harvest. Temperate in all things, we have striven for victory, and victory is attained.

De Corona

1 Cor. ix. 25.—'Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.'

The Christian life, says the Apostle, is a race, and a hard race too. How hard it was Paul himself knew by experience, for to him it had meant hunger and cold and nakedness, and stonings, and scourgings, and distresses, and persecutions. But the prize at the end more than compensated for the hardships of the race. If, says Paul, it is worth while for the athlete to sweat and struggle and strain himself for that fading wreath, it is infinitely better worth while for the Christian cheerfully to face all the hardships of his race for the crown that will be his reward at the end; for that crown is an *incorruptible crown.*

1. The objection is often raised that we ought not to think of rewards at all in the Christian life. Christianity, we are told, ought to be disinterested; the man who makes much of the rewards of the Christian life really turns the Christian faith into a kind of glorified selfishness. Now, all that would be true if men were Christians for reward and not for love. Our Lord Himself repudiated that kind of discipleship when He roundly charged the people with following Him, not because they saw signs, but because they ate of the loaves and were filled. A man who follows for the sake of reward—if such a man could be found—would not be a Christian in the true sense at all. But really this danger of an interested and selfish Christianity is quite an imaginary one, for, in our religion, the object of love and the reward of our discipleship are one and the same. Christ is the object of our love. Christ is the end of our striving. That is why we run the race—because the love of Christ constrains us; that is the prize we hope to win at the end of the race—to gain Christ and be found in Him.

¶ The feeble soul that may be lured to love and service by the promise of reward is unworthy to be enrolled in the regiment of Heaven. We needs must follow with assent the words in which the Saint disclaims with poignant ardour all thought of personal advantage, the desire of Heaven and the fear of Hell being alike blotted out in the burning radiance of devotion: 'Thou drawest me, my God . . . Thy death agony draws me; Thy love draws me, so that, should there be no Heaven, I would love Thee. Were there no Hell, I would fear thee.' [1]

2. This talk about *the selfishness of the expectation of reward* savours very much of cant. For what, at bottom, does the doctrine of reward in the Christian religion amount to? It simply amounts to this: an assertion of the reasonableness of Christianity. No man would deliberately enter upon a life that he knew was bound to end in loss and disaster. A man has not only the right, but surely he is under obligation, to make the very best of his life. To justify any course of life a man must satisfy himself that it means profit and gain of good at the end. For the sake of the good at the end a man may be quite ready to run risks and suffer hardship. Explorer after explorer has braved all the perils and discomforts of the Arctic winter, and he has thought the advancement of scientific knowledge, and the fame and glory he himself would win, sufficient reward. It was only the hope of the gain at the end that made these undertakings and adventures rational.

What makes the Christian life reasonable is just this, that it *is great gain.* It is perfectly true it demands sacrifice and self-denial, but the sacrifice and self-denial are not ends in themselves, they are means to an end; they are to issue in a larger and richer life. If there were no richer and fuller life to be gained, Christianity would stand condemned as an irrational religion. Even as it is, there is a conflict between the Greek ideal of self-development and the Christian ideal of self-sacrifice. The advocates of 'culture' are ready enough to say that Christianity means self-mutilation and impoverishment. And certainly, if the

[1] Lady Dilke, *The Book of the Spiritual Life*, 167.

Christian doctrine of self-denial were for denial's sake merely, the Greek ideal would be the one to commend itself to reasonable men. We cling to our Christian faith because, in it, sacrifice is not an end but a means. It stands, not for impoverishment, but for enrichment. The end of the sacrifice is a more abundant life. 'There is no man,' said Jesus, 'who hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time . . . and in the world to come eternal life.' What are we to make of that promise of the hundredfold? Are we to regard it as a mere vulgar bribe? It is nothing of the sort. It is our Lord's emphatic assertion of the reasonableness of the Christian life. Christ's service justifies itself by its results. It is, indeed, the one and only reasonable life. For a life of self-pleasing and sin ends in impoverishment, loss, and disaster. 'He that saveth his life shall lose it.' But the Christian life justifies itself on the grounds of reason, and prudence, and common sense. Godliness has the promise of the world which now is and of that which is to come. And of this reasonableness of the Christian life the doctrine of rewards and punishments is simply the expression.

3. Now, in the text the Christian reward is set forth under the figure of *a crown*. What kind of a crown is it the Christian is to receive? It may be that we have interpreted the figure too literally, and perhaps it is because of the materialistic way in which we have interpreted it that critics of Christianity have been so ready to object to its doctrine of rewards. When we have read of the 'crown' we have thought of the crown of gold that adorns or burdens a monarch's head, and it is something of that kind we have looked for as a reward of our running the Christian race. But, as a matter of fact, the 'crown' held out to us is a nobler crown by far. It is an incorruptible crown. It is described in three ways: Paul describes it as a 'crown of righteousness'; James describes it as a 'crown of life'; and Peter describes it as a 'crown of glory.'

In other words, the 'crown' which the Christian wins is a sanctified character, an abundant life, the 'well-done' of God. And that is an 'incorruptible' crown. The things he labours for form part and parcel of himself. Time and death cannot strip him of them. The holy character, the eternal life which Christ bestows—these never fade or perish. But to win that incorruptible crown—

Thou too must tread, as He trod, a way
Thorny and cruel and cold and grey.
Rebels within thee, and foes without,
Will snatch at thy crown.
But march on, glorious; martyr, yet monarch, till angels shout,
As thou sit'st at the feet of God, victorious, 'Conqueror and king.'

Incorruptible Crowns

1 Cor. ix. 25.—'Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.'

THINK of the corruptible crowns which are to so many the objects of a fond ambition. How many are seeking the tinselled crowns of gaiety, their daily luxury being found in the thin enjoyment of the world! How corruptible is the crown! The first cold shower that falls occasions its destruction. One of the most pitiful sights to be seen is that of a gay and shallow woman plunged into some sudden sorrow. She is like a butterfly in the rain. How many others are seeking the crown of fame! How many are possessed with the burning desire to be recognized, to be esteemed, to be influential, to be remembered. Yet how corruptible is the crown! When the clock strikes the last stroke of the hour, there is a lingering and decreasing reverberation before the sound quite dies out. That reverberation represents a man's posthumous fame, the short lingering remembrance that follows the final stroke of his life. If a man wins fame, he wins a corruptible crown. Others seek the crown of wealth. All they want is money. They measure their success by money. It is their standard and their crown. Yet how corruptible! It is the prey of many foes. The moth can destroy it. The rust can corrupt it. The thief can steal it. These are types of the crowns admired by the world, coveted by the world, sought by the world, and they are all corruptible. If a man gain one he is regarded as having had a successful career.

But now as Christians we are seeking crowns of another kind. What are they? A worthy

crown is one that is not of the world; that is to say, it is not a worldly one, it is not a corruptible one. If we are wanting material crowns as a reward for saintliness they will not be given in this world or in the world to come. God has other crowns more precious and incorruptible, and He is lavish in the bestowal of them.

I sorrowed that the golden day was dead,
Its light no more the countryside adorning;
But whilst I grieved, behold!—the East grew red
With morning.

I sighed that merry Spring was forced to go,
And doff the wreaths that did so well become her;
But whilst I murmured at her absence, lo!
'Twas Summer.

I mourned because the daffodils were killed
By burning skies that scorched my early posies;
But whilst for these I pined, my hands were filled
With roses.

Half broken-hearted I bewailed the end
Of friendships than which none had once seemed nearer;
But whilst I wept I found a newer friend,
And dearer.

And thus I learned old pleasures are estranged
Only that something better may be given;
Until at last we find this earth exchanged
For Heaven.[1]

Have you ever closely noticed that gracious list of beatitudes which Jesus tells us are the special possession and reward of the Christian life? How august are the payments! How incorruptible the crowns! Look at one or two. 'Blessed are the merciful.' Why are they blessed? What is their reward, their crown? 'They shall obtain mercy.' God will give their hearts the same sweet feast as they have given to the heart of their fellows. 'Blessed are the pure in heart.' In what consists their blessedness? What is their reward? 'They shall see God.' How incorruptible the crown! And how appropriate that purity should be rewarded by visions, that they who have washed their eyes clean and clear should be able to feast them upon the beauty and glory of God! 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.' Whence comes their blessedness? What is their reward? 'They shall be filled.' Their spiritual hunger shall meet with spiritual satisfaction. The hunger for life shall receive the bread of life. The thirst for life shall receive the water of life.

¶ Mrs King closes her book on *Kelvin the Man* by describing the funeral of Lord Kelvin in Westminster Abbey, on December 23, 1907. 'A heavy pall of fog hung over the sky, but we knew there was light beyond; and as the sweet sound of the music rose through the gloom, we thought of the words, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."'[1]

If you want a summary of Biblical teaching respecting virtue and its crowns, you will find it in the Book of Revelation—'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' A crown of life! Your physician examines your body, the healthy workings of which have somehow or other become clogged with disease. He finds out the obstruction, ascertains its character, discovers its root. Then practically he says to the patient, 'Attend to my instructions, loyally follow my prescriptions, be faithful to my word, and I will drive the disease out of your body and give your body a crown of life.' The reward of obedience is health, fresh, vigorous health, a crown of life! That is precisely what the Lord says to us about our souls. He says, 'Be thou faithful. Be loyal in My service. Be scrupulously obedient to My will, and I will heal thee of all thy diseases. I will remove all thy moral sicknesses and spiritual infirmities. I will give thee moral and spiritual health, make thee every whit alive—thou shalt have a crown of life!' That is the reward of obedience and faithfulness, the incorruptible crown of life. The reward for doing a good deed is that we have more life to do another. That is the meaning of Christ's benediction upon the faithful servant—'Thou hast been faithful over a few things.' His faithfulness had crowned him with life. He had greater life for doing greater service. At first he had only life enough for 'few things,' but faithfulness had given him life enough for

[1] Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler.

[1] J. Moffatt, in *The Expositor's Year Book*, 20.

more! 'Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things!'

What, then, is the principle which arises out of all this? It is this—that the character developed by a struggle is the crown which rewards it. The reward of athletic exercise is not found in some bronze medal or silver cup. The reward is found in the physical health which the exercise begets. It is found in fresh muscle, pure blood, and sound limbs. The reward of mental exercise is not found in some lucrative calling. It is found in mental power. It is found in logical insight, in mental illumination and comprehension. The reward of moral exercise is not found in reputation, in some honoured name or fame. Moral exercise finds its reward in a clear and healthy conscience, in the capacity for sound moral judgment. And the reward of spiritual exercise will not be found in a magnified other-worldliness, in some materialized heaven. The reward will be found in the character which spiritual exercise has produced. To be found at last in righteousness, that will be our crown.

¶ 'Every noble life,' says Ruskin, 'leaves the fibre of it for ever in the work of the world; by so much, evermore, the strength of the human race has gained. Mighty of heart, mighty of mind—" magnanimous "—to be this is indeed to be great in life; to become this increasingly is, indeed, to advance in life—in life itself, not in the trappings of it. He only is advancing in life whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into living peace.'

We know many people who are already wearing the crowns in their hearts. They wear the crown of humility, the crown of patience, the crown of brotherly kindness, the crown of hope, the crown of love. These are the crowns we must seek, the incorruptible crowns. Let us seek for such character as will be to us a worthy crown. Let us become more spiritual. Let us inspect our purposes and ambitions, and make it our one aim to be found at last in Christ, in possession of the righteousness which is of God by faith. Let us consecrate ourselves to one holy and supreme ambition, to awake at last in the likeness of our God.[1]

[1] J. H. Jowett, in *The Examiner*, August 6, 1903.

The Christian Pugilist

1 Cor. ix. 26.—'So fight I, not as one that beateth the air.'

THE metaphor which St Paul is using is that of a boxer raining hard blows upon a sturdy opponent. Dr Moffatt's rendering of the text is, 'I do not plant my blows upon the empty air.' But notice that little word 'so' which stands at the beginning of the text. Does it not call up a vivid picture to the mind? We seem to see the Apostle, as he dictates his letter to the amanuensis, putting himself in the attitude of a Corinthian pugilist, the left arm in a position of defence, the right ready to deliver a telling blow; both fists clenched, and with eyes aflame with fiery energy, he says: 'Thus box I, not as beating the air.' In other words, he affirms that the Christian life demands a courage, passion, and resource such as the competitors in the games at Corinth employed. It is not a sham fight about which we can be careless, nor is it a practice at which we hit out at an imaginary opponent; we are up against real opposition, and to waste our energies is fatal. Christianity is an intense and earnest thing, and from its challenge we emerge either as victims or victors, either with shame or glory. The text demands our attention, for it presents to us in a vivid way the vigorous, active, earnest side of the Christian life.

1. A false emphasis has often been placed on certain aspects of Christianity which has tended to make it unattractive and even repugnant to youth. Youth somehow has got the impression that religion is a crutch for the lame, and not a weapon for the strong; that it is a comfort to those in trouble and sorrow, but has no message for healthy and happy souls. That is an unworthy conception. Christianity has a message for young and eager lives who are ready to respond to a challenge to sacrifice and service. We misunderstand the very genius of the Christian faith unless we realize that it is more than a refuge from all life's troubles; it is the impetus of all high and courageous enterprise, the trumpet call to quest and conquest.

¶ In a book on *Psychology and the Preacher*, Dr Crichton Miller has some trenchant things to say about this effeminate and limp conception of religion. He calls it Peter Pan religion. You remember how Barrie pictures Peter Pan,

on the day on which he was born, hearing his parents discussing what he was to be, and was so appalled by the prospect in front of him that he flew off to Never-Never Land to escape from it. You recall also how this aversion to shouldering a responsibility comes out in the scene where he wants Wendy to be his mother, but is not willing to be her husband. What he desires is some one who will care for him and protect him, not some one whom he will care and protect. A great many people treat religion as the Never-Never Land—as a means of escape from the cares and anxieties of life—and fail to realize that its mission is to give us the strength to meet these. It is no surprise that youth is repelled by a presentation of religion which calls for no hard fighting and no heroic spirit, which takes one away from life rather than making one its conqueror.

2. The call of Christianity is the call to a grim struggle with the enemies of the Kingdom of God. A cross is at its centre. The shedding of blood is inscribed on its banner. It is a religion, not for cowards, but for heroes; or, shall we say, for those capable of responding to a high and heroic challenge.

¶ At a critical moment in the French Revolution, when everything seemed lost, Barbaroux dared to cry for six hundred men prepared to die. An impossible claim, you say. Yet no. For far away in Marseilles, largely out of it all we would have thought, they heard it, and six hundred did lay down their happy days, did leave their homes, did actually start for Paris, carrying their lives openly in their hands to toss them away when the hour struck—some one is needed as a sacrifice, well, here are we prepared for that—did doggedly march the long six hundred miles, on and on to the place of doom, beating out with their steadily tramping feet that 'Marseillaise' which nobody can hear without his heart exulting, and the blood racing faster in his veins.[1]

¶ Dr Fosdick tells the legend of St Martin of Tours, how one day he heard a knock at the door of his cell. 'Who are you?' he cried. The figure answered: 'I am the Saviour.' The saint, however, was suspicious, and said: 'Show me the print of the nails,' and the story goes that the Devil vanished from his sight. There is no Christianity without the print of the nails. It is this active, eager, vigorous, energetic, throbbing, pulsating faith that flings out its challenge to youth's allegiance and loyalty.

3. Paul's Christianity is pugilistic. Let us note the sphere in which he exercises it, the opponent against whom he directs his blows. He says: 'I hit hard and straight at my own body, and lead it off into slavery.' This must not be interpreted as meaning that we are to maim the body, but rather to train and discipline it, so that it shall be the slave and not the master. At first we are just a little surprised that Paul turns the argument in this direction. We should rather have expected him to have urged us to hit hard and straight at all social and moral abuses. To-day that is where we put the emphasis: we challenge men and women to strike hard blows at every foul wrong that impedes the coming of the Kingdom of God. And yet Paul is very wise in making self-discipline the prior condition to all such service. All social reform begins with ourselves. We must be potent in self-conquest before we can be effective in the campaign against social wrong and spiritual darkness. Our first opponent is ourselves. If we are going to serve under the Christian banner, we must cease to excuse our failings and strive to conquer them.

¶ Read Barrie's *Dear Brutus*, and you will discover that this is its theme. All the characters portrayed therein feel that had their circumstances been different, they would have done better. In the magic wood, their circumstances are according to their wish, and they fail just as they had done before. For example, there is Matey, the dishonest butler, who is convinced that if he had only gone into business he would have been an honest tradesman. In the wood he is the successful boot merchant who openly boasts that he has amassed his wealth by untruthful methods.

Paul says that he exercises his pugilism on his body to make it his willing slave. It is not only the body, however, but our desires which have to be brought into subjection to the Christian ideal. We are born with the pugnacious instinct, which may be employed for either good or evil; but its first use is for the conquest of our own low nature, for the mastery over everything that would drag us into the gutter. Having accomplished this, we are fit for service.

[1] A. J. Gossip, *The Galilean Accent*, 87.

Everyman's War

1 Cor. ix. 26.—'So fight I, not as one that beateth the air.'

It must be evident even to the most careless observer that physical life in all its grades is largely made up of effort and struggle, and that without effort and struggle no living creature can maintain itself. Penalty follows swift upon any systematic disregard of this fundamental condition of earthly existence, not only in the human species but in every other, from the lowest and simplest forms upward. Death waits upon every cessation of the effort to keep alive, every failure in the struggle to adjust the organism to its environment. So plainly is this the case that there is a disposition on the part of many people to regard it as the most outstanding feature of our common experience. We used to hear a great deal about the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest. We do not hear so much about it now, for the reason that scientists have been finding out and telling us that other factors enter into the problem than can be comprehended within this formula. Life is not all struggle, not all a conflict of species with species, and individual with individual; this is not a full and complete explanation of the way in which things have come to be what they are. But it is near enough to it to make most people feel at times as if there were little else to take into account. As Tennyson writes:

For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal;
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike,
And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.

It is a commonplace that life is a warfare, and most of us know it only too well. The conditions of our lot are such that we have to fight to hold our own and keep going, and no advance in civilization seems to do much to modify the operation of this stern law of Nature. Sometimes we get tired of the fight, would escape from it if we could, feel it to be altogether irksome and against the grain, and we wish the struggle could stop. We wonder why things are ordered that way, why they could not have been arranged differently, why this conflict should have to be maintained in one form or another from the cradle to the grave.

But now see what biologists are telling us about this. It is that if it were not for this necessity there would be no progress, no attainment, and that in time everything living would be swept off the face of the earth.

¶ An illustration of this in the lower stages of evolution is supplied by the way in which the huge shell-fish of former ages were distanced in the race of life by the vertebrates of which man is now the chief. Any intelligent being, looking at the movement of things on this planet millions of years ago, would have said that the giant shell-fish had by far the best of it, that they were so well protected that no harm could come to them, whereas the poor vertebrates were exposed to a thousand dangers which they had to be incessantly alert to avoid. As far as could be seen at that time, the vertebrates were not nearly so likely to survive as the shell-fish. But what has happened? The shell-fish are shell-fish still—those of them that are left—whereas the vertebrates are lords of sea and land. It was just because the latter had to struggle and fight that they developed one faculty after another, and rose in the scale of creation.[1]

Effort and struggle are unescapable conditions of life under any and every phase, from the lowest to the highest. In infancy and old age we have to be fought for by those who care enough about us to want to do it, or by Society at large, but still the necessity is there all the time; we never get away from it; neither Society nor the individual can retain, much less increase, his hold on life without constant fighting, fighting in a thousand different ways. It is like rowing a boat up stream. We cannot stand still. The moment we cease to row we drift down stream again.

It is clear that by the will of God every gain in life, human or sub-human, is the fruit of effort and struggle. This is a law which holds good on all planes—physical, mental, moral, and spiritual. As man has conquered his successive kingdoms he has qualified, like the athletes in the Greek games, for admission to a higher arena. It is not all a question of vanquishing a foe; much more is it a question

[1] R. J. Campbell, in *Christian Commonwealth*, Sept. 10th, 1913, p. 845.

of ability to respond to the demands of a higher environment. As Walt Whitman says, in his 'Song of the Open Road':

> Allons! through struggles and wars!
> The goal that was named cannot be countermanded.
>
> Have the past struggles succeeded?
> What has succeeded? yourself? your nation? Nature?
> Now understand me well—it is provided in the essence of things that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary.

Some day we shall have done with the shedding of human blood. Man will not always be warring against man, either in the battle-field or the counting-house. As Professor Huxley said in his Romanes lecture, the law of the survival of the fittest is giving way before the higher impulse of fitting as many as possible to survive. But we shall not have done with the struggle when war in all its modes has been left behind; we shall still have to fight, but the fighting will be on a higher plane. For the individual it is on a higher plane even now. It is the struggle to conform the soul to Christ, to respond to the call of His spirit, to bring every faculty of our being into captivity to His love.

It is a curious thing, but true, that all advance, in whatever field, material or spiritual, is due to opposition. Have you ever seen the wheel of a cart slipping round and round instead of gripping the road? There is no going forward until the road resists the wheel. So it is in life; we are only beating the air until we have something worth striving against, and striving prevail. In spiritual warfare we fight to overcome the natural man, not to destroy him, but to render him obedient to the law of Christ. To bring our whole nature into perfect harmony with the will of God is the true end of our striving.

Since this is so, since life is and must ever be a warfare of the soul, of faith against doubt, of light against darkness, he is wise who enlists under the leadership of the great Captain of Salvation. He can reinforce a fainting, irresolute soul and make it a fortress of power. He can turn a bitter swamp of sorrow into a fertile garden of moral beauty. Some of us have seen Him do these things, and we know that He does come with His sweet ministry of healing and of help, and an infinite moral sympathy, turning defeat into victory, and the sob of shame into a shout of joy.

Self-Control

1 Cor. ix. 27.—'But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.'

THERE are three views of the relation of the body to the soul that have at different times moulded human thought. The first of these is what may be called the Greek view. To the Greek the life of the body was the true life, and with the death of the body it practically ceased, although Homer does picture the dead as moving drearily through the world of shadows. But side by side with this grows up the teaching of the philosophers, and to them the body was not the centre of, but the obstacle to, true life. Socrates on his deathbed discourses on the joy of deliverance from the degradation of the body. And in this view the Greek philosopher is at one with the Eastern world, with Buddha and the doctrines of Brahmanism. To all these alike the body is the dwelling-place of sin, illusion. Salvation is attained when the body is left behind and the soul is set free. But this whole conception of things is alien to true Christian thought. Matter is not the enemy of spirit, but the means whereby spirit manifests itself. As the world is 'the visible garment of God,' so a human body was the 'visible garment' of Christ.

1. I buffet my body, says the Apostle. We must take care not to misapply these words. He who wants an argument or an excuse for the neglect or the misuse of the body must not come to the New Testament, and least of all to the teaching of St Paul. The body has its lawful claims which must be lawfully satisfied, or it cannot do its proper work. In the hierarchy of life there is a higher and a lower, and the lower must not be suffered to usurp the place of the higher. The body has rights as servant; it has none as master, and at all costs the soul's supremacy must be asserted and maintained. The wisely

disciplined man is—to quote Professor Huxley's words—' one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience.'

So what Tennyson calls the ' province of the brute,' must be ruled if life is to fulfil its true purpose. It is a false spirituality that leaves this task undone while it follows a more adventurous quest.

The king must guard
That which he rules, and is but as the hind
To whom a space of land is given to plow.
Who may not wander from the allotted field
Before his work be done.

Christian asceticism is the asceticism of self-control.

¶ Do you not see why Christian Science has come as a veritable gospel of hope to thousands of people? It is because Christian Science has got hold of this truth that man is meant to control his body, not to be controlled by it. When a man says that he cannot give up the use of alcohol or smoking, that he cannot keep any rule of fasting, he is practically confessing that he has failed in the primary task that God committed to him; that he has allowed his physical nature to usurp authority. And if presently he tells you that he cannot keep his body in ' soberness, temperance, and chastity,' it is only that the mastery of the physical over the spiritual is growing stronger.[1]

Are we any of us sufficiently alive to the duty of self-discipline? Men have pampered their bodies till poverty seems to them more intolerable than sin, till insignificant privations leave them irritated and discontented. What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed? are questions that occupy far too large a place in the thoughts of the men and women of our time. So the soul is made to minister to the body, and not the body to the soul.

Reverse that process and human life begins to move harmoniously, for the body is the instrument of service, and it follows that whatever degrades the body enfeebles the soul's power of self-expression. It is only the constant realization that our bodies belong to God that can preserve the true balance of our nature. St Paul enforces the appeal for chastity by the assertion that our members are the members of Christ, that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. ' Therefore glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits which are God's.'

The principle is far-reaching in its application. For if the degradation of the body is an injury done to God, what shall we say about the contented acquiescence of many Christian people in social conditions that render any right development of the physical nature almost impossible for many of our fellowmen? And if the perpetual pressure of physical needs stunts the soul at one end, luxury degrades the body at the other.

¶ Kipling, in his *Captains Courageous*, tells the good effect of discipline on one of the idle rich. He shows how the son of a wealthy American, brought up to do nothing and to be useless, falls overboard from one of the great liners, and is picked up by one of the North Sea fishing boats, and taken to the fishing grounds, where for months he has to work for his daily bread. It was at first very much against the grain, but it was the making of him, and when the fleet returned and he was restored to his home, he abjured idleness ever afterwards.[1]

All self-indulgence leaves our physical nature unresponsive to the call of the Spirit. As Peter says, the appetites of the flesh ' war against the soul,' and except they be held in check they will spread red ruin through the life. Let us lay it well to heart, as the ordinance of God Himself, that without self-control neither peace nor blessedness is possible to man. All authority on earth may be given unto him, but except he win and keep the captaincy of his own soul, he is utterly undone.

¶ ' Now,' said Christian, ' let us go hence.' ' Nay, stay,' said the Interpreter, ' till I have showed thee a little more, and after that thou shalt go on thy way.' So he took him by the hand again, and led him into a very dark room, where there sat a man in an iron cage. ' How camest thou in this condition? ' asked Christian. ' I left off to watch and be sober,' answered the man, ' I laid the reins upon the neck of my lusts; I sinned against the light of the word and the goodness of God; I have grieved the Spirit and He is gone; I tempted the devil

[1] J. H. B. Masterman.

[1] C. E. Newman.

and he is come to me; I have provoked God to anger and He has left me; I have so hardened my heart that I cannot repent.' Then said the Interpreter to Christian, 'Let this man's misery be remembered by thee, and be an everlasting caution to thee.' 'Well,' said Christian, 'this is fearful; God help me to watch and be sober, and to pray that I may shun the cause of this man's misery.'

2. It is worthy of note that when Paul speaks of the 'flesh,' with which the 'spirit' wages unceasing warfare, the word denotes 'not merely the body, but the whole unregenerate personality, the entire unrenewed self that thinks and feels and wills and desires apart from God.' Hence in the Apostle's terrible category of the 'works of the flesh,' besides sins like fornication, uncleanness, drunkenness, and so forth, we find enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, envyings, and such like. So that there is an inner spiritual self, as well as a grosser physical self, which has to be tamed and brought into subjection.

¶ When we speak of self-denial, we are apt to confine it to eating and drinking; but we ought to consider that, though a strict temperance be necessary in these things, yet these are the easiest and smallest instances of self-denial. Pride, vanity, self-love, covetousness, envy, and other inclinations of the like nature call for a more constant and watchful self-denial than the appetites of hunger and thirst. Till, therefore, we make our self-denial as universal as our corruption, we can no more be said to practise self-denial than he can be said to be just who only denies himself the liberty of stealing.[1]

And without doubt this is the harder lesson. A man may keep under his body and yet scarce advance one step towards a true self-mastery. Nay, our very self-denial—so many and so strange are the disguises in which the human spirit can wrap itself—may come to be but another and subtler form of self-indulgence, and while we are starving and scourging and lacerating the body, the seven devils of pride and uncharitableness and self-sufficiency may be holding carnival in the heart. Yet with what a strangely disproportionate zeal do we give ourselves to the tasks of the higher self-discipline! We know with what pains and diligence a man will school himself that he may always appear self-possessed in the presence of others, that he may never be guilty of anything that could be counted vulgar or ill-bred, and how, if by chance, he should so far forget himself as to do anything which should cause him to 'look foolish' in the eyes of others, it would be sufficient to destroy his peace of mind for a whole week afterwards. And yet that same man will let slip the hounds of pride and envy and hate, without one thought of the noble quarry which his pack may hunt down.

We must learn to crucify 'the flesh, with the passions and the lusts thereof.' 'Our work, my work,' says Amiel, 'consists in taming, subduing, evangelizing, angelizing the evil self.' That is no child's play, nor the work of a day; but it must be faced, for without self-conquest neither peace nor blessedness is possible to man.

¶ This is how the good Sir Richard Grenville put it to Amyas Leigh: 'To be bold against the enemy is common to the brutes; but the prerogative of a man is to be bold against himself. To conquer our own fancies, Amyas, and our own lusts, and our ambition in the sacred name of duty; this it is to be truly brave and truly strong.'[1]

3. Control of the body with its desires will go far to keep right the man who is right, but what can it do for the man who is down? It is his very self which has need to be controlled. It is like some weak, unhappy monarch set upon the throne of a turbulent kingdom whose warring factions he has neither strength nor wisdom to subdue. It is the 'I,' the central self, which sin has weakened and enslaved, and except somehow there be deliverance and reinforcement for it, all the exhortations in the world to arise and rule will be but wasted breath.

¶ 'She was tired, she was sick of that barren exhortation—Do right, and keep a clear conscience, and God will reward you, and your troubles will be easier to bear. She wanted strength to do right—she wanted something to rely on besides her own resolutions; for was not the path behind her all strewn with broken resolutions? How could she trust in new ones?'[2]

[1] William Law.

[1] Kingsley. [2] George Eliot, *Janet's Repentance*.

It is the old confession wrung again and again from earnest souls struggling with the task of self-conquest. God helps those who help themselves, we say sometimes; but there is no salvation in a saying like that. Immeasurably greater is the message of Christ: God helps those who cannot help themselves. When we are yet without strength—it is then He discovers Himself to us and saves us. 'The Christian Church,' says Canon Gore, 'upholds a moral ideal, and thus teaches men the true end of human life, but the special characteristic is rather that she supplies the means than that she suggests the end.'

There are many ways of stating the truth. 'Self-control,' Paul says, is a 'fruit of the Spirit.' It is no wild growth of nature, neither is it the product of careful soul-culture only, but it springs from that Divine life which is God's gift to man through His Spirit. But when the usurper is already in possession, what shall a man do? 'Present yourselves unto God.' And what we of ourselves could never do, He who is stronger than the strong man armed will accomplish for us. Only by Christ-control can we win back our lost self-control, only by Christ-control can we be saved.

The Christ of all the Ages

1 Cor. x. 4.—'They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.'

In a sense the few words comprising this sentence contain one of the most arresting and, at first sight, one of the most perplexing sayings to be found within the covers of the New Testament.

The main purpose of this portion of the letter was to make plain to the members of the church in Corinth, that no outward connection with a divine society, no formal bond of attachment, was sufficient to ensure their soul's welfare. The Apostle is warning them against the peril of thinking that, because they are converted and baptized and members of a church, no further effort is called for.

He does that in a curiously roundabout way. He takes an illustration from the early Israelites. They, too, in a sense, were under the cloud of sin; they were baptized by following their leader through the divided waters of the sea; they, too, had spiritual meat and drink for their needs, that is, a kind of sacrament of the Lord's Supper. But in spite of the connection with a divinely guided and blessed society, many of them fell by the way and suffered punishment for sin. The formal bond of union did not prevent such things from happening, and the whole point of the illustration, as St Paul used it, was to enforce the same lesson on the members of this church.

Now glance back to see the place in the argument occupied by the text. It occurs simply in the illustration when the Apostle is describing the privileges of Israel. 'They did all eat the same spiritual meat,' he says, 'and did all drink the same spiritual drink.' No doubt the reference is based upon the manna which was sent to Israel for their food, and the water which flowed from the smitten rock. But beside the material food and drink, there was a sustenance of which these, like the elements in the Lord's Supper, were but the symbols. The people had a spiritual food and drink.

'They drank,' he says, 'of that spiritual Rock that followed them.' Or, in other words, there was a Divine Presence with them in their journeyings, of which the rock from which the water flowed was a symbol. Then comes the arresting word. 'That Rock was Christ.' It was not a similitude of Christ. It was Christ. 'Christ,' we say, 'in the wilderness with the children of Israel?' 'Christ following them in their journeyings, how can that be? Christ came to the world centuries later.'

That obviously is a difficulty with a text like this. And before we can get a deeper understanding of its truth, we must have that problem removed.

1. When we speak of our Lord by name, we call Him Jesus Christ. Jesus, of course, is a personal name. Christ is a title. That title was the subject of men's speech long before Jesus came to earth. It was the word which summed up the national hopes of the Jewish race. They looked for the coming of a conqueror, who should lead them to victory, and as God's appointed servant should rule over them. When Jesus came, He claimed to be the Christ, though in a different sense than they had meant, and it was largely disappointed hopes which led them to turn against Him so fiercely.

But after Jesus a change of meaning came over the word. It was for ever afterwards associated with God's chosen Son. Gradually it came to bear a meaning akin to that of the Logos, or Word of God, as used in the Gospel of John. And with that meaning in thought, a distinction had to be drawn between the earthly life of Jesus, and the eternal life of the Son of God. Men looked back before the birth of Jesus and they knew that the Christ must have lived—just as they looked forward after the Cross and Resurrection, and knew that He lived and reigned on the right hand of the Father.

The best way to put the truth would be to say that Jesus was the human life of Christ—Christ as He came down to the world—as the world's Teacher and Redeemer. And we do well to join the names together because for us every thought of Christ—of His nature and work—is derived from Jesus, and depends absolutely upon Him. What should we know of the Christ if He had not come down to the world? It was necessary that the light should shine before the eyes of men, that they might behold His glory. And from that earthly life—what has been called the human life of God—the light shines both back and forward. 'The Christ is the same both yesterday, to-day, and for evermore.' What Jesus revealed in the few years of His life and ministry did not begin to be with His birth or cease with His passing. His days on earth are as it were a picture thrown on the screen of time, illuminating the eternal purposes of God and the nature which has never changed in its relationships with man.

What St Paul is doing here is using the light of Christ's incarnate life to illumine the past pilgrimage of mankind. He reads the story of his own people—thinks of the problems which beset them, and the heroism of their journeyings. No doubt but that a Divine Presence was with them, that provision was made not for the needs of the body alone, but for the spirit as well. A spiritual rock followed them, and in the light of the Incarnation the Apostle had no hesitation in declaring 'that rock was Christ.' These children of an earlier age knew little enough about the real nature of the Divine, but they were all unknowingly supported and strengthened by the self-same Spirit who, in later ages, took flesh in Jesus.

2. Now it may seem to us to matter but little how we interpret the far-off past. Our interest is in present needs, and the answer to them. In a sense that is true. But the larger our thought of God's ways in history, the wider our vision of His workings, the fuller faith shall we find to be ours in the present.

We are led to see that whatever men's creed may be, whether formed in the darkness of ignorance or the light of knowledge, all the strength and comfort which they find has the same source as our own. They may never have heard the name of Jesus, they may have lived before He came to earth at all, but nevertheless the spiritual rock from which they drank was none other than Christ Himself.

¶ The early Christian Church rested and rejoiced in this truth. Justin Martyr says, 'Christ is the Word of whom every race of men were partakers, and those who live reasonably are Christians, even though they may have been thought atheists, as among the Greek Socrates and Heraclitus and men like them.' And Augustine says, 'The thing itself which is now known as the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and in fact was with the human race from the beginning.' And William Law, the great mystic, said, 'The Eternal Word, or Son of God, did not then first begin to be the Saviour of the world when He was born in Bethlehem of Judæa; but that Word which then became Man did, from the beginning of the world, enter as a word of life, a seed of salvation, into the first of mankind, was inspoken into him, as an ingrafted word.' [1]

All souls that struggle and aspire,
  All hearts of prayer by thee are lit;
And, dim or clear, thy tongues of fire
  On dusky tribes and twilight centuries sit.

Nor bounds, nor clime, nor creed thou know'st,
  Wide as our need thy favors fall;
The white wings of the Holy Ghost
  Stoop, seen or unseen, o'er the heads of all.[2]

One of the subtlest perils of the religious life is to think that God's resources freely offered to us depend upon the clearness of our intellectual apprehension, or upon the warmth of our feelings. And because we cannot realize the Presence of Christ we are in danger of

[1] E. W. Lewis. [2] Whittier.

thinking He is absent from us. That mood often comes over the spirit of faith. And it helps us in the grip of such a mood to gain the larger vision of the Christ. Israel did not know Him or feel His nearness. In some dim and disordered way they felt that God was helping them, but nevertheless the rock from which they drank was Christ. So, too, with other men and nations.

Must it not be the same with us? We think we must realize Him as a Person, and because we do not possess that power of vivid recognition, we begin to doubt whether He is indeed near. That is a vast mistake. Somehow we are helped in life's battle—girded with mysterious strength to meet its demands—supplied day by day with new hopes; we, too, drink from a spiritual rock that follows us—that is Christ's Presence, that is our communion with Him. Unseen, unrealized, He is still there and nothing can remove Him from us.

¶ When Phillips Brooks told Helen Keller about the revelation of God in Christ Jesus she said, 'I know Him although I have never known His name. I have felt His presence. It is like the warmth.'

We in the midst of to-day's life are in touch with that same Presence, for nothing divides us or can divide from that all encompassing Spirit. To us is given the larger opportunity, for He has become revealed to us in Jesus, and every invitation which comes from those gracious lips beckons us to know and trust, and enter into the joy of a certain fellowship.

No fable old, nor mythic lore,
Nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore
Of the oblivious years;—

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is he;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

Enter into the joy of His fellowship, dare to count upon it, to lean upon its strength, and in the light of the truth as it is in Jesus—we, too, like countless generations before us, shall drink of the spiritual rock which follows us, but we shall know that rock is Christ.

The Rock that Follows

1 Cor. x. 4.—'They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.'

Paul daringly lays hold, for his own purposes, of a fragment of legend which he found current amongst the Jews. Working in their own way on the old stories, the Rabbis had elaborated the idea which, on the surface, is almost grotesque, that the rock which Moses struck was round like a beehive, and that it rolled along the desert after the people, stopping where they halted, so that they never needed to feel the pangs of thirst again. Probably, if they had been challenged, they would have admitted that, in literal fact, that was not true; the rock itself did not move. But it was a way of saying what *was* true, that God's care and providence bore them company at every stage, and this they sought to declare to men. That is the language of faith, for faith dwells not on the bare and obvious details of an experience, but on that which is behind them, and is the meaning and the glory of them.

1. *The view which faith takes of the life of a man.*—This, in a word, is, that miracle is never far from it, and that, however hard and irksome life may be, there are springs of Divine consolation lying close at hand.

God is at work in all history and in the life of every man. It is He who gives to each his daily bread, He leadeth men by ways they know not. But from most of them His activity is hidden as by thick veils, so that they see only the human part in all that happens, whilst in the Old Testament we have history with the veils removed, history meditated and brooded over until it has given up its secret, and God's part is seen. It would be a great calamity if we consented to regard that older story as a Divine exception, floating vaguely in high heaven, in strong contrast to the laws and possibilities of our life to-day. 'These things were written for our *learning*,' says Paul, and we cannot learn from what is of a different kind from our own. What is written about Israel corresponds to the view which faith takes of the life of any man to-day; however blank and common that may seem to those who see it from outside, it is a life beset by Divine kindness, appealed to and shepherded by God, and some day becoming

aware of God. To faith it is clear that every blessing which reaches us, the light of the sun, and the sweet airs, and all that quickens life in men, come because God means it so. There is nothing insignificant, and if we understood life better we should feel its wonder more; for to watch the movement of events, to see the grace that follows and encompasses men, and offers itself, and continually is rejected—that brings us near to adoration of the miracle of God's patience.

It must be confessed that that is not the view of life which prevails most widely. Men are crushed rather by a sense of the insignificance of their effort. It seems to come to nothing.

¶ Richard Jefferies, in one place, describes the spectacle of the open space before the Royal Exchange in London, where our national energy and effort are seen concentrated. 'Here human life appears indifferent to all but itself, stripped of conventional gloss and politeness, yielding only to get its own way, carried on in a stress of feverish force like that which lifts the tides and sends the clouds onwards.' And then he turns to ask as to the outcome of it all; 'Will not a result be left which those of a hundred years hence may be the better for? No, not one jot; there will not be any sum, or outcome, or result of this ceaseless labour and movement. It vanishes in the moment that it is done, and in a hundred years nothing will be there, for nothing is there now. There will be no more sum or result than accumulates from the motion of a revolving cowl on a chimney-top.'

That embodies in eloquent words the feeling under which men are continually crushed, the sense of the emptiness of human life and effort; and the only real alternative is this deep view which faith suggests of life as surrounded and sustained by ministries of the living God.

Faith is not blind to the facts of life. It acknowledges that there are cruel tracts of time, days and years which are hard to live through. Faith never makes light of trouble, only it attests that trouble has an altered quality when a man has learned that his Father is in it, and that there is not a hard or bitter fact in life which is not matched by some grace in Him. It is when the poor and needy seek water and there is none that they know most of the Rock which follows. Miracle is close to every one of us, miracles of comfort and of healing; and beyond all the gifts of God is the gift of open eyes to recognize the help which lies so near.

'Rock of Ages, cleft for me'—
Thoughtlessly the maiden sung;
Fell the words unconsciously
From her girlish, gleeful tongue;
Sang as little children sing,
Sang as sing the birds in June,
Fell the words like light leaves down
On the current of the tune—
'Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.'

'Rock of Ages, cleft for me'—
'Twas a woman sang them now,
Pleadingly and prayerfully—
Every word her heart did know.
Rose the song as storm-tossed bird
Beats with weary wing the air,
Every note with sorrow stirred,
Every syllable a prayer—
'Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.'

2. *The view which faith takes of the worth of Christ to men.*—That rock, in Paul's interpretation, was not simply embodied marvel lying close to the common life, it was something more intimate and tender. Paul believed that wherever in history God has followed men, and borne with them, and offered His refreshment to those who thought nothing of Him, it has been a part of the ministry of Jesus Christ. That is His character, says Paul, near, accessible, miraculous, able to bring refreshment to all men because once He was smitten, but patient of neglect, and offering Himself each day anew to those who have refused Him; that Rock is Christ.

The suggestion of Paul's borrowed figure is entirely clear. That rolling, travelling rock was nothing less than embodied reviving in a parched land; and Paul's witness concerning his Lord is that simply to touch Him—to touch Him and not merely to talk about Him—is to *have* refreshment. The New Testament knows nothing of a sombre piety. The disciples, in His own day, found in Him their defender when they were challenged because they did not fast, and to-day also the spirits of gloom have no defence from Jesus Christ. We live near to

One who was smitten for us and by whose stripes we are healed. Out of the near sense of the redemption there comes not sorrow but song, a daily renewing of hope and gladness and good cheer; and those who have known Him thus can imagine no better thing for their fellows than that they should know Him also, and by an infection of gladness His Kingdom is set forward. It is thus that faith conceives its Lord.

This verse stands in the most earnest and sorrowful connections. Paul is speaking of the opportunities of men who yet made nothing of them. They had their sacraments which might have brought them close to God. They were baptized into Moses, bound in a solemn compact with him by that tremendous experience at the Red Sea, when, facing the risk of a disaster, they crossed with death-sounding menace in their ears. Surely in an hour like that, when they should have been crying to God, they should not have missed the Divine. Then through all the desert years, they had from day to day the ministry of God to keep them alive. And they made nothing of it!

It is easy to travel on through life, enjoying, learning, achieving much, and missing the things which make life great. He who is the source of a hundred streams of gladness in the world, offers Himself as the Rock that once was smitten, and men, taking the refreshment, think not of whence it comes. And meanwhile the pathos grows, for these men need Him more and more, not His gifts only but Himself, and by their refusal of Him they make life poor. 'I taught Ephraim to walk,' says God; 'I took him by the arms, but they knew not that it was I who healed them.' In a world rich in Divine blessing, there is no blessing greater than the open eyes which can see how rich it is, and how near God comes.

The Value of the Scriptures

1 Cor. x. 11.—'Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.'

THE declaration of our text has become so familiar to us, through the continuous teaching of the Christian Church in all its ages, that we find it somewhat difficult to realize how essentially surprising it is. The Apostle is writing to a community of Greeks, who joined with the quick intelligence of their race all the characteristics of a nation in its decline. The intelligence had degenerated into superficial cleverness, and morals had sunk into a corruption which even that age felt to be shameful; and in that fair city, the heart of Greece, the centre of the arteries of trade and busy life, was recognized the very metropolis of vice, the place where beyond all other places except Rome itself

> Deep weariness and sated lust
> Made human life a hell.

No wonder that He who came to call not the righteous but sinners had 'much people' in that city of Corinth!

And now St Paul is writing to 'build up' these converts, to warn them of the dangers besetting them from that old evil nature which, though driven out by a mightier power, was still ever prone to return. From whence will he get his warnings of past experience by which to teach them? Might they not say that the history of the Hebrews was the experience of an alien and uneducated race, of men corrupted by generations of slavery, which could never apply to a proud people dowered with the possession of a literature such as the world had never known? All this the Corinthians might well have said to St Paul when he brought for their admonition examples drawn from the history of early Israel, a slave-nation just set free after four centuries of bondage, and as yet untouched by the refining influences which ultimately enabled the Jew to take a place second to none among the great peoples of mankind. But the incongruity does not end there. It would be hard to say which of these ancient peoples had less in common with the twentieth-century England—the children of Israel wandering through the desert of Sinai, or the Greeks reclaimed from paganism by the gospel fourteen centuries after the law was given. And yet this day there are practical lessons being drawn from Old Testament and New which inspire not only men and women trained in Christian modes of thought. These old words appeal to Europeans and to savages, to men separated by every variety of difference from those to whom they first were spoken. Interpretation and application may enhance the vividness of their appeal, but in the absence

of the human teacher the words of the Book are found perfectly able to teach their own lesson.

¶ In a Bechuana kraal, in 1838, a tribesman stopped puzzled before a family group. 'What are those things you are turning over and over?' he asked. 'Is it food?' 'No, it is the Word of God.' 'Why do you talk to it?' 'We do not talk to the Book; it is talking to us.' 'Does it speak?' 'Yes, it speaks to the heart.'[1]

Experience through eighteen centuries has verified the Apostle's assertion, and shown that *somehow* the old-world history, of Corinth or of Sinai, was written for our admonition. As the Apostle puts it in another place, 'The things that were written aforetime were all written for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the scriptures we might have our hope.'

Now, let us look at the words in which the Apostle here describes those for whom the inspired record was designed—'for our admonition, *upon whom the ends of the ages are come.*' This somewhat colourless expression we see, from inscriptions and papyri of contemporary Greek, to be a technical term in wills and similar documents, which signifies the *descent* of property from a testator to his heir. The meaning here, then, is 'To whom the ends of the ages have descended as our inheritance'; and when Tennyson wrote, 'We, the *heirs* of all the ages,' he was unconsciously borrowing from St Paul. What, then, are the 'ends of the ages' which form the inheritance of the Christian Church? We may paraphrase the whole verse thus: 'All these experiences successively befell ancient Israel as an example to posterity; and their inclusion in Scripture was providentially designed for our instruction, heirs as we are of all that the ages of human history have achieved.'

1. Why has the history of Israel proved so peculiarly helpful for the admonition of succeeding races? It is very easy to see one point wherein Israel differed enormously from other nations. National history meant to them incomparably more than it meant to any other people. The Greek and the Roman could take a pride in many events of the comparatively brief periods behind which their national annals faded away into legend; but in neither case can we assert that the past exercised a really dominant influence upon the present or suggested powerful ambitions to mould the future. But Israel lived in the past, and had a unique power of reading the past so as to seize the meaning of the present. Look at the perpetual retrospects over national history which recur throughout the Bible. The prophet's appeal, from Deuteronomy down to the dying speech of Stephen, wins its cogency from the oft-repeated story of the dealings of God with His people. It is often asked what gave that little nation so unchallenged a place in the religious history of the world, and the answer is the same from whatever school it comes. Like many other nations, Israel possessed a line of priests; but there as everywhere else the priests were absolutely incapable of contributing an idea to the store of religious truth—too eager to conserve the past to realize at any time that an unprogressive faith is a faith which no longer lives. The secret of Israel's development was in the prophets; and of all the many-sided activities of that extraordinary race of men, none is more remarkable than their method of using the national history. The Israelites were not without annalists of the ordinary Oriental type—the type so familiar to us from the inscriptions of Assyrian or Persian kings. But the anonymous prophets who compiled the Books of Samuel and Kings not merely threw aside the normal subjects of history, and told of 'not kings and lords, but nations—not thrones and crowns, but men.' That was much, but it was nothing to their special power of seeing God in history which marked them out among all the historians who have ever written. It is this gift which makes their work imperishable. There is much, very much, in the Old Testament which we can no longer recognize as God's revelation to *us*. It is the history of a progressive revelation; and over whole pages of it a Divine hand has written large, 'Ye heard that it was said to them of old time . . . but *I* say unto you' what in many cases seems the very opposite of doctrines announced as truth by the olden seers. We do not doubt the Future Life because its very possibility was passionately denied by some of the latest writers in the Old Testament canon; and when we hear Ecclesiastes say, 'Be not righteous overmuch,' we are entirely free to

[1] W. Canton, *Yesterday, To-day and For Ever*, 45.

declare that there is more inspiration in Christina Rossetti's words:

Because Thy love hath sought me,
All mine is Thine, and Thine is mine;
Because Thy blood hath bought me,
I will not be mine own but Thine.

But that does not mean that one jot or tittle of Old Testament revelation can lose its significance.

2. Was, then, the history of Israel alone rich in inspired teaching? Did not providence shape the ends of *other* ages, and can we nowhere else than in Scripture understand and justify the ways of God to men? In one sense, no. Israel prepared the way for One whom all sane men now confess to have stood alone among the sons of men. In its relation to Jesus Christ the Bible must always stand alone among the sacred literatures of the world. It is because *He* belongs to all mankind that the Book which tells of Him bears translating into hundreds of languages and adapts itself so wonderfully to the needs of all men. The time is past when we could believe that God selected a favoured nation and left the nations without witness of Himself. Israel's prerogative was, like all God's favours to men, only a call to special service.

3. What shall we say, then, of our own great history? Are we to see throughout our fifteen-centuries' development the constant traces of the finger of God?—that development which through all the centuries has been protected by the wall of the sea, so that in happy isolation a strong and resolute people might work out their own deliverance? And for what has there come to our race that adaptability which has taken them into every part of the world, and enabled them to civilize and to rule where other races have entirely failed? Surely we cannot doubt the answer if we believe that God has His purposes for the redemption of mankind, and that He works by developing single peoples which may do their several parts towards the one great aim. The British peoples have been Divinely trained to put a girdle round the globe, that they may further God's purposes for mankind. And if we make the great refusal, care more for our own empire than for God's Kingdom, we may be sure that the providence which has shaped us will cast us aside.

¶ More than half a century ago Sir Herbert Edwardes wrote: 'That man must have a very narrow mind who thinks that this immense India has been given to our little England for no other purpose than our aggrandizement. Empires come into existence for higher purposes than this, however blindly intent we may be upon our own. And what are these purposes? Have they no higher object than the spread of vernacular education, the reduction of taxes, the erection of bridges, the digging of canals, the increase of commerce, the introduction of electric telegraphs, the laying down of great lines of railroad? Do we look no further than these temporal triumphs of civilization? We cannot think so meanly of Him with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. All His plans and purposes must look through time to eternity, and we may rest assured that the East has been given to our country for a mission, not only to the minds and bodies, but to the souls of men.'[1]

Let us strive, then, to realize, as part of our religious duty, and not merely as an intellectual exercise, these achievements of the ages which descend as a heritage to us. Have we received into our own souls the 'admonition' intended by the old-time 'examples' which we know so well? The voice that calls, the power that strengthens, is not only that of humanity in its highest and mightiest manifestations. God who in olden days spoke to our fathers by the prophets in many different ways, and always a fragment of a truth at a time, has spoken to the heirs of the ages in His Son. He, the Only-begotten God, the Man in whom all the possibilities of mankind meet in their supremest form, calls us to tread His path of sacrifice and service in His strength and holding His pierced hand. And He tells us that if we can so use our heritage of the past as to make it fertile of blessing to the ages of the future, His finger shall transform it into an inheritance that fadeth not away.

[1] Eugene Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, ii. 209.

Temptation and Escape

1 Cor. x. 13.—'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.'

Separating this verse from its context, and considering it apart, we should say that here St Paul is dealing with a confession which had been made to him. Some one in Corinth was finding it a very hard thing to live there as Christ would have us all live. Some one, or the Church on behalf of some one, had written to St Paul telling him how difficult he was finding it to keep his feet in that miry clay: that he was not making progress as a Christian: that he did not seem to be getting any better, but rather worse, for he was always getting older, and every separate failure was adding to his general despair. Appetites, passions, and the subtle call of lower things, which, as he honestly believed, he had repudiated once for all when he joined the Church, were now putting in an appearance again, degrading him in his own eyes, making him feel insecure, and, worst of all, leading him to ask himself whether he was even now to any thorough depth a disciple of Christ. It may have been a case of that kind, and more than one, which St Paul had before him when he wrote the words of the text.

This certainly is a state of mind which at various stages, and with varying degrees of intensity and darkness, visits and tempts every one who has received in his spirit the effectual call of God. It is a condition of which we all have had experience and may still have: when we feel that we are little better than we ever were, that we are still liable to the intrusion of evil spirits, of ways of looking at life of such a kind that if we were to yield to them we should be disgraced even in our own eyes. And when this mood visits us, we are in real fear that one day the world, with its fashions and compromises and intricacies, will wear down our inner protest, and eat through our defences.

Let us see how the Apostle deals with a case of this kind.

1. *Temptation Common to All.*—At the outset he assures this one who has confided in him that the temptations which he is lamenting are common to all, that he is not alone in enduring these private ignominies, and not alone in having such feelings about himself in consequence. Now that was a great service. It is a great service to one who, for his own reasons, is troubled about himself to be assured that he is not alone, that he is not the only one who has ever felt that terrible sense of being nothing in particular and everything by turns, that, so far, 'no temptation hath taken him but such as is common to man.' But it is a service, and makes for his good, only when the same conclusion is drawn from the fact that he is not alone as St Paul draws here.

It may be a very bad thing, a very whisper of the Evil One, to tell one who is troubled about himself, about his own moral failures, that nearly everybody is in the same position, that nobody is really good, that we are only human, meaning that we are less than human, that therefore we are not to expect very much of ourselves. There is no more insidious snare, nor one which more often succeeds with us, than the suggestion, when we are profoundly disappointed in ourselves, that we are making a mountain of a molehill, that everybody beneath the surface is alike in having such feelings and in being unfaithful to them.

When St Paul said, 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man,' he did *not* mean that it is quite hopeless for any one to erect himself above himself, that we never can be anything but a poor set from the moral point of view. He did *not* mean that because temptation is universal therefore we should submit to it, and take no course for our safety; that because it is universal therefore it is not serious. He means the very contradiction of all that. He means to say that temptation is such a very human thing, so native to man, so subtle, that there is no help for any one of us with regard to it except in God.

2. *God's Faithfulness.*—After assuring him that this condition is not peculiar to him, the Apostle says: 'God is faithful'; and in saying that St Paul said everything. What God asks us to do He will enable us to do. He always accompanies His Word to us with power. Why, our ordinary language on this matter bears witness to what really goes on at such a moment. When a suggestion comes to us to do something we speak of it as an *impulse*. We say we had

an impulse to do such and such a thing. We speak of 'acting upon the impulse of the moment.' That is to say, we confess then that an idea, when it comes to us, is something more than an idea—it is a force pushing us from behind. In order not to obey we have actually to resist. So is it with regard to those purest impulses towards good which in all manner of ways come to us all. At the moment we feel that all we need to do is to yield ourselves up to a Power which there and then is offering to bear on us. 'God is faithful.'

3. *A Way of Escape.*—The Apostle continues: 'He will with the temptation also make a way to escape.' Now, the idea of 'escaping,' the word itself, has an air of cowardice about it, which, we may be sure, does not belong to it in this place.

St Paul, indeed, uses no grandiloquent speech as to what a man should do when he finds himself beset by temptations. He does not recommend a man to draw his sword, and clench his teeth, and do many another strenuous and showy thing which looks so well in a picture and sounds so well when addressed to a great audience; but which is all, as a matter of fact, futile in those hot, and terrible, and lonely hours when we are sorely tempted to do wrong. No; St Paul tells us here that when we are tempted, the first and only thing to do is to get away from the spot, to run in fact for our life. That may sound tame. It may sound less than the highest; but it is the very highest. It is the only truth and fact of the matter. There are situations in life, dark turnings in the moral world, sheer precipices where we must not trust ourselves, where the only sensible and religious course is to get away. In passing through the 'Inferno,' Dante's spiritual guide would not allow him to stand still for a moment.

We must not go about the world tempting ourselves. We must not go about with our eyes everywhere, on the lookout for moral encounters and risks—any more than, if we were passing through some primeval forest, we should put our head into every hole and corner on the chance of waking up some lion or tiger or snake which we were afraid had not observed us. On the contrary, should a lion or tiger encounter us, we must not be ashamed to give thanks to God if in that blinding moment we can climb a tree. We are here in this world, so far as these slumbering things are concerned, to let bygones be bygones; we must not awaken the elementary and abysmal temptations, but must hasten on in God's clear daylight towards the highest point we see.

¶ My colleague, when I was in Edinburgh, told me that when he was sailing on the Mississippi—a river difficult of navigation on account of its sandy banks—he got into conversation with the captain of the boat. A cosmopolitan sort of gentleman came up and said to the captain: 'I suppose you know where all the sandbanks are?' The captain replied: 'No, I don't know where any parts of the sandbanks are. That is not my business. But I know where the deep water is.'[1]

In conclusion, the only way of escape from temptation is to have our hearts well set on something else. An empty heart, an idle, restless, frivolous heart, invites the evil spirits—as our Lord indeed once explicitly taught men. It was this that Samuel Johnson meant when he said that a man could not be more innocently employed than at his business. It was this that Emerson meant when he said, 'A man's task is his life-preserver.' It is this that the New Testament and the Church mean when they ask us to believe that not one of us is safely settled in this life, ready for its long demand, or for its sudden and unexpected assaults, who has not a Holy of holies within his soul, who has not the Lord Jesus Christ as his own private conscience and companion.

¶ 'I only speak my own experience,' says Mark Rutherford, 'I am not talking theology or philosophy; I *know* what I am saying, and can point out the times and places when I should have fallen if I had been able to rely for guidance upon nothing better than a commandment or a deduction. But the pure, calm, heroic image of Jesus confronted me and I succeeded, I had no doubt as to what *He* would have done, and through Him I did not doubt what I ought to do.'

St Paul knew very well that we have not escaped from a temptation simply when we have moved away from it in a geographical way—in a *lateral* way, so to speak. He knew very well that the temptation can follow us into the cloister, and assault us even upon our knees. And yet his counsel in this passage

[1] J. A. Hutton.

will stand every test. The way to escape the thrust or siege of evil things is—to get on to another level. It is the *other level* that rescues us.

¶ You have seen a cat trying to stalk a bird. If the bird remains on the ground, on its enemy's level, it will be lost. But it does not remain on the ground. The emergency discovers to the bird its proper resource. It spreads its wings, it escapes in the midst of the higher element.[1]

This Way Out

A Sermon to Children

1 Cor. x. 13.—'God . . . will with the temptation make a way of escape.'

'This Way Out' or 'Way Out,' are words that are often written up in large railway stations where people get puzzled at the number of doorways and passages and cannot find the way out to the street, or in big halls where there are crowded audiences all wanting to get out quickly, or in big public gardens where hundreds have gone to hear the band or to see the fireworks.

'This Way Out,' 'This Way Out': those are the very words that God writes up for us when we are in any trouble. For *we* get into trouble, we boys and girls sometimes; when our lessons are not properly learned, or when we have made some one cross, or when we have been cross ourselves and some one has scolded us; *we* get into trouble, and God is very good in helping us to get out of it.

¶ A ship was one day sailing through the Straits of Magellan, away to the south of South America. The passage through the Straits is very dangerous, because there are so many rocks, and if a storm comes or darkness falls, a ship may be wrecked. Just as the ship was entering, it was hailed by another, which signalled, 'Will . . . you . . . let . . . us . . . keep . . . you . . . company . . . going . . . through . . . the . . . Straits?' But the captain of the first ship was surly, and replied, 'If . . . you . . . do . . . not . . . know . . . the . . . way . . . out . . . you . . . have . . . no . . . business . . . to . . . go . . . in.'

People may say that about our troubles. If we do not know the way out of them, we have no business to get into them. Now we want to learn the way out. We know the way in well enough, because we sometimes get into trouble without meaning to. But God will show us the way out. 'This Way Out,' 'This Way Out,' He says.

1. One 'Way Out' of trouble is *along the line of earnest prayer.*

Have you ever been in a Puzzle Garden? That is a garden where the walks have hedges on each side, and they go round and round and in and out, until one is in a regular puzzle. But in the very centre there is a delightful little summer-house. You rest there for a little while, and then you have to get out, and it is just as great a puzzle to get out as to get in.

¶ I was in the Puzzle Garden one day at Hampton Court (there they call it a *maze*), and after getting to the centre I had the greatest difficulty in getting out. But in the centre of that garden there is, not a summer-house, but a raised platform. And a man stands on it, and he can see every one in the maze. Soon I heard him calling to me: 'Turn to the left, sir,' 'To the left again,' 'Now to the right,' until I got out.[1]

Life is like a puzzle garden sometimes. We do not know which way to turn, whether to go forward, or to turn to this side or to that; but if we look up to God in prayer, He will show us the way, and bring our souls out of trouble. We shall hear a voice behind us saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.'

2. Another 'Way Out' of trouble is *along the line of determined resistance.*

If we are tempted to do wrong we must say 'No' to the tempter at once and distinctly. He may say, 'Only this once,' but we must answer, 'No, not even once will I do what is wrong.' He may say, 'Other people do it,' but we must reply, 'Then *I* will not.' He may say, 'It is only a little sin,' but we must say, 'No, I will not do even a little wrong.' The place to resist temptation is at the very beginning.

¶ Do you know how wasps' nests are destroyed? They are destroyed when the wasps are only grubs like caterpillars, and before they have learned to fly. You get a squib, like

[1] J. A. Hutton, *The Fear of Things*, 81.

[1] W. V. Robinson, *Sunbeams for Sundays*, 51.

those they fire off on the fifth of November, and light the end and put it into the hole in the ground where the nest is, and cover it over with a turf. And then all the grubs in the nest are suffocated by the smoke. If you wait till the grubs have wings and have learned to fly, then a ton of dynamite will be of little use. Because the wasps will be buzzing all round your ears, and stinging you, and then flying away.

The Way out of Temptation is just near the entrance gate. 'Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away.' Say 'No' to the tempter immediately, clearly, decidedly, and you will escape.

3. Another 'Way Out' of trouble is *along the line of right action.*

If people are vexed with you for something you have done, and some say you were silly and some say you were selfish, and some say you were a coward, and some say you were not, you will hardly know what to do. Do what is right and go straight on. It does not matter so much what people say: we should listen to what God says.

¶ You have read about King Alfred in your history books. One story about him is that he promised that all travellers along the roads in his kingdom should be protected against thieves and robbers; only, he said, they must keep on the high roads. If they wandered over the moors, or if they strayed into the forests, or if they went up the mountains where there were caves, then they would not be safe. But if they kept on the King's highway, he would protect them.

God says the same thing to us. 'If you keep on the High Road of Doing what is Right I will protect you.'

There is sure to be trouble in this world, and there are some of us that are almost sure to get into it, because we always do; but when we get into trouble, it is a great thing to know how to get out of it. And this is the way out, along the pathway of earnest prayer to God, along the pathway of determined resistance to wrong, along the pathway of simple doing what is right.

The Holy Communion

1 Cor. x. 16.—'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?' (R.V. marg.).

If Christianity is to be interpreted by its history, there can be no question of the central place which we must always give to the Eucharist. Participation in a common Communion is, or ought to be, the seal of an uninterrupted visible fellowship among those who join in its celebration.

As the First Epistle to the Corinthians would seem to place beyond doubt, the sacred brotherhood made the weekly assembly the occasion of a common meal, and it is at least certain that all attempts to interpret its significance must begin with its obvious character as a bond of fraternity. This is in itself sufficient to account for the jealous exclusiveness with which in early days the Christian congregations guarded the Eucharist from profane eyes. We have only to think how members of the old trade guilds would distinguish between those who were members of their own mystery, freemen of their own craft, and the general body of the citizens, in order to understand the ways of the primitive brotherhood of Christ. And the persecutions to which the Church was subject at the hands, first of the Jews, then of pagan society, and finally of the imperial government itself, would intensify the need for shutting out the stranger from the official meetings of the baptized. There is no reason to suppose that the ministration of the Sacrament was originally hidden from the uninitiated on the principle which guarded the ceremonies of Mithra or the mysteries of Eleusis. Spiritual things are discerned only by the Spirit. But there are no secrets in Christianity which, so far as the mere publication is concerned, may not be bought for fourpence by all who can read the New Testament.

Here, then, we have our point of departure for the study of the Christian Communion. Its form proclaims its purpose. In all ages, in all parts of the world, among civilized communities no less than among barbarous tribes, there is something sacramental in a common meal. It protects and develops the common life. The

orgy of savages and the city banquet, the hospitable board and the family dinner are not fortuitous developments. All are customs arising directly out of the social principle. The life of man is a common life. We are members one of another. No man lives to himself and no man dies to himself. Long before we mount to the sphere of religion participation in common food has become the symbol and cement of spiritual loyalties.

So, thou must eat the White Queen's meat, and
all her woes are thine.

Thus speaks the robber chief in Kipling's *Ballad of East and West* to the son whom he is dedicating to the service of the Indian Government. To stab the traveller to whom you have offered drink has ever been the basest treachery. To eat another's salt is to accept his friendship.

Nor is religious brotherhood any exception to the universal human principle. On the contrary, there is probably more of religion in the origin even of the simplest customs of society than for the most part we are aware. There is therefore nothing strange or unusual in the fact that a sacred meal should be the characteristic rite of Christianity. The catholicity of our religion means its conformity to the broad principles of universal nature. The Hebrew Christian, accustomed to the ceremonial customs of his race, according to which those who ate of the sacrifice were partakers with the altar; the Gentile Christians, whose antecedents were those of the Græco-Roman civilization with its sacrificial feasts and mystery cults—all alike would see in the Eucharistic rite which they were called to share an intimate and sacred act of fellowship, in which the benefit of their common religion was realized by the faithful.

How does St Paul in the passage before us describe this benefit? He calls it 'participation in the body and blood of Christ.' If we are to grasp the meaning of this phrase, we must not seek to interpret the words in isolation. They do not explain themselves. We do not see at once what they signified for the primitive Christian community. The very last thing that we ought to do is to tear them away from their original setting in the New Testament and in the life of the Christian brotherhood of the first century. The teaching of the later Church has been affected by a thousand influences which have played from without upon ecclesiastical thought. There is the influence of the Græco-Roman world, of Oriental philosophies, of Greek and Phrygian mysteries, of popular notions only imperfectly affected by those Hebrew ideas which were the very frame in which Jesus and His disciples habitually thought. These are only some of the forces which must be taken into account before we can understand that religious climate, that mental and moral attitude, which finds no meaning in the language of the Saviour, if it be not held to imply a relation of substance between the bread and wine and the Flesh and Blood of our Divine Redeemer.

What could be more significant than the way in which St Paul paraphrases the words of institution? For him 'This is my body' means 'Here you have fellowship in my body.' 'The bread which we break'—these are his precise words—'is it not a participation in the body of Christ?' He takes it for granted that every Christian would at once recognize the truth of his statement. This is clear from its interrogatory form. But his paraphrase of Christ's language would have been confusing and unnecessary if he had held those opinions of the later Church which have been freely attributed to him. Alfred Loisy, whose modernism is the reflex of his papal environment, has declared that 'the mystery of St Paul's conversion is his conversion to the Mystery religions.' Now the religions in question are supposed to have taught that union with the god was achieved by conveyance of the Divine substance in sacramental food. Union of the believer with Christ is universally admitted to have been the kernel of St Paul's doctrine. And this he conceived to be attained, so they argue who agree with Loisy, not, as the Apostle says, by faith, but by the subtle operation of the Sacraments.

But turn once again to the passage which we have been considering. St Paul is telling the Corinthians that they cannot be partakers at once of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons. The former is, of course, the Eucharist. The latter refers to those sacrificial feasts in heathen temples to which in the ordinary course of social intercourse the Chris-

tians might find themselves invited. There is a fundamental inconsistency, he declares, between partaking of these sacrifices and sharing in the Eucharist. Why? Because God was on the Christian altar, as the heathen divinities were sacramentally present in the offerings? Even if the pagan worshippers so believed, the Apostle shows no sign of adopting any such idea. He does not go to the mystery religions for an explanation of the Christian Sacrament. Like a true Hebrew, he goes back to the ancient worship of his own race to find the analogy by which to compare and contrast them. 'Behold Israel after the flesh,' he says. Go back to the Old Testament. Look at that Divinely ordered system in which, before the eternal purpose of redemption was accomplished in Jesus the Messiah, men learned the principles of fellowship with God. 'Are not they which,' according to the Law of Moses, 'eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?' That altar—the altar of the Levitical law—had been called by Malachi the table of the Lord, not because God lay upon it (the thought would have been abhorrent to a Jew), but because the altar and all things thereon were dedicated to Him in whose Temple it stood. 'The Lord hath prepared a sacrifice,' said another prophet, Zephaniah, 'he hath sanctified his guests.' The thought, therefore, of a holy table to which God as Host summoned His people to enter into fellowship with Himself was perfectly familiar to the Hebrew mind of St Paul.

Can there, then, be any doubt what St Paul understood the Lord to mean when He spoke of His Body and Blood? What is it that in one Epistle after another he is never tired of setting forth as the secret of the spiritual life, as the source of the new creation, as the power of God unto salvation? What is it that differentiates St Paul's message from all the mystery religions and all the mystical philosophies with which the faith of a Christian has been compared? Is it not those facts of a public historical redemption which in this very Epistle to the Corinthians he describes as constituting 'the foolishness of preaching'? Twice over he makes use of the striking phrase, 'I delivered unto you that which also I received,' once when he is establishing the truth of the Resurrection, once when he is guarding the sanctity of the Communion. What, he asks, is the faith in which you stand? Not the teaching of St Paul, but 'the word of the Cross' gives the basis of inviolable fact upon which alone the believer stands. 'Christ died for our sins,' He died and 'was buried.' But even this fact is empty of all vital power without another as real and as concrete. 'He hath been raised.' This, too, is an event in time. It took place 'on the third day.' It was attested by definite experiences common to hundreds of witnesses. Christ is no mystical Redeemer God, like Osiris or Serapis, with whom the pagan sought for union, but Jesus of Nazareth, who suffered on the Cross and rose from the sepulchre. Through these facts He gained His power to save; through these facts, and these alone, we enter into fellowship with Him.

And it was on the night when He was delivered up, in the very hour when He attained the consummation of His redeeming work, that Jesus took bread. It was the historic Jesus, standing in the midst of His faithful disciples, who instituted the Eucharist, as it was this same Jesus who, ere another sun had set, was lifted on the reconciling Cross. That was the fact as Paul had received it. Then follows St Paul's own comment after the institution, which at once makes it clear what he himself understood by the consecrating words of Jesus. 'For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death.' Why is it that those who in the sacred feast hold communion with Him, at whose board they are guests, proclaim the atoning Death? Because the Body and Blood of Christ mean His Cross and Passion, as they are fruitful for the salvation of souls through His triumphant rising. The Cross was Christ's bread, because His meat and drink was to do the will of Him who sent Him and to finish His work. The Cross is our bread, because that finished work is the seal of pardon, the secret of power, the source of the Spirit.

Bread of Heaven, on Thee we feed,
For Thy flesh is meat indeed;
Ever let our souls be fed
With this true and Living Bread.

Vine of Heaven, Thy blood supplies
This blest cup of sacrifice;
Lord, Thy wounds our healing give;
To Thy cross we look and live.

Day by day, with strength supplied,
Through the life of Him who died,
Lord of life, O let us be
Rooted, grafted, built on Thee ![1]

The Succour of the Sacrament

1 Cor. x. 16.—'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?' (R.V. marg.).

In these days we need all the succour we can get, if we are to keep the right spirit. We have come to the long stretch of the road, with no turning in sight, all uphill. Naturally we test again the various aids which have helped us in the past, especially our Bible, and the use of prayer and Christian fellowship. For we know that from the unseen comes the most certain succour. It grows both more difficult and more necessary to use these helps for our spirit which are the channels of the Holy Spirit. But they all stand the test. Still we need more. Have we sought it as we might in the Sacrament of Holy Communion?

This Sacrament is the clearest way of witnessing to our Lord. It is the hall-mark of loyalty to Him, to the graciousness and importance of His death, to the reality of Christian brotherhood. That is what drew some of us to it at the first. We were very ignorant and very vague, but we were quite sure of one thing—we had to confess our Lord before men. This was the unmistakable way. But this Sacrament has another side, much more important. To use the old term, it is a *means of grace*, a channel of succour, God's opportunity as well as ours. He desires it so as to benefit us, more than we ever desire it to glorify Him. It is a place to receive, a place of restoration and renewal and refreshment. Think of the words 'the cup of blessing.' That surely means more than the cup of our thanksgiving. It is the cup of God's benevolence.

When we think of the succour of the Sacrament we may view it in two ways at best: (1) its adaptability to the Divine truth it expresses; (2) its adaptation to the human nature, to which it brings blessing.

1. Think first of its suitability to express the sovereign truths about our Lord.

(1) It is His way of telling again all down the centuries the story of His splendid death. When the bread is broken the action tells again of His broken body. When the wine is poured, we are told again of the outflow of His blood. It is as if He with His own lips told us the essentials of the story, and with an intimate personal appeal. 'Broken for you' are the words of Scripture, and to every loyal heart they declare the immediate and present influences of the great death died so long ago. It is true that our Lord, before He died, said but little about His death in the way of explanation or of application, but by the establishment of this Sacrament He took care that the fact, ever more important than the theory, should never be forgotten. The centuries gone are blotted out and the deed upon the Cross is again seen by wondering eyes, wheresoever the Christ's disciples gather to His observance. And it may be that often we understand it as the first beholders did not, their eyes clouded with sorrow, their hearts heavy with apprehension. Here our Lord presents anew to us the transcendent fact of His death.

(2) More than this, its suitability to the Divine truth it expresses is shown because it tells so clearly *His present availableness*. What did that death mean? Not simply that all that needed to be done was done that we might be welcomed to forgiveness, but that it released Him to be available in His own personality to every true seeker. His whole personality, perfected in obedience, complete in sacrifice, is available for each of us. We are not mere beholders, we are partakers. 'Eat,' 'Drink thereof,' are the words in our ears. The broken bread of which we partake means His body and the Personality of which His body was the outward appearance; the poured-out wine of which we partake means His blood, and His blood, the vehicle of life, was the symbol of His life. Therefore when the bread and the wine enter into our bodies this is the plain and unmistakable assurance, that He, His personality, His life are available for us. So far as He can, so far as we make it possible for Him—for there is nothing magical here, but the living interaction of two personalities—so far as He can, He bestows Himself upon us for the daily struggle, the awaited sorrow, the renewed temptation. Union with Him becomes a simple, shining fact here.

[1] J. Conder.

2. But secondly, consider how perfectly adapted this sacrament is to the need of our human nature.

(1) Two things we suffer from in all our inward life—*monotony and vagueness*. Day after day we have to struggle on with much the same kind of incident in our intercourse with the Unseen. Day after day, too, the spiritual facts are, for a good many of us, like a fog-bank, real and hiding something still more real but dim. This sacrament deals effectually with these two disabilities. It removes monotony by giving focal points of spiritual experiences, mountain peaks on the journey, a little troublesome to climb, but vastly rewarding.

Most of us have not lived long before we discover what things stir our hearts most. For some to revisit the old birthplace, for others an ancient grave. There we can feel again; solemnity comes upon us and vitality. We shake off the dust which has gathered on mind and soul. For some of us, again, to hear the plash or the roar of the waves, to smell the odorous sea, always gives the sense of space and vision. For others, it is the hills; the dim blue outline makes our hearts leap up, and then to follow the upward path, away into the silences, the only companions a few sheep cropping the turf, means release and freedom. These are focal moments of experience. If we are wise we seek them on our holidays. It is the spirit more than the body, or at least as much as the body, which needs refreshment. And in such moments we get it.

Our Lord knew this. He knew the danger of dullness in the religious life, the constant plodding, a little forward, a little backward, less backward than forward, still a little less forward than we had hoped. So He gives us special moments. This Sacrament is Christ's trysting place with us, His appointed tryst, for more prolonged talk, for quiet waiting together.

(2) The further proof of adaptation to human need is this. Most of us are greatly helped by outward acts to make inward facts more real. We need the lifebelt if we are to swim easily in the rough water. *Symbols are the lifebelt.* The marriage ring does not make marriage more of a fact. But the marriage ring helps every wife to know the reality of the married life and the holiness of her vow. The Sacrament of Communion is the marriage ring of the union of the soul with God in Christ.

Thus for our succour this sacrament is perfectly suited to teach the Divine truth and to meet the mould of our human nature. We on our side have a responsibility. The saying of the old mystic stands true, never truer than to-day, 'All that happened to Christ must happen to His disciples.' For us there is a crucifixion, a death, a renewal. Once, many times, always, there must be a dying to self. For us, too, there is to be always a rising with Him to win victories, many resurrections from deep distresses and heavy castings down. Our valleys of Achor are to be doors of hope.

When you stood by the turnings
Named Ease and Strife,
Say—which did you take
On the road of Life?

When you heard old companions
Shout Crucify!
And dance for your death—
Did you dare to die?

When you reached the dark portal
That Christ called Pain,
Did you gladly pass out
With the Splendid Slain?—
Were you buried—deep down?
Did you rise again?

The Brotherhood of Christ's Table

1 Cor. x. 17.—'We, who are many, are one loaf, one body: for we all partake of the one loaf' (R.V. marg.).

To commune with God implies that we are linked to one another; friends of the One Friend are friends of one another; brothers of the One Divine Brother are brethren. The Supper is a parable of brotherhood; as we partake of the one loaf we become members of the household of faith. We may meet as strangers, but unseen hands have joined us together as brothers. It is a real Communion of Saints; it is a Brotherhood of Christ's Table.

¶ Never has the sacrifice, the so-to-speak vertical relation between the individual man and God, between the worshipper and the object of his worship, been without the sacrificial meal, the communion, the so-to-speak lateral, horizontal relations between man and his fellow man, between the worshippers one and all.[1]

[1] F. von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion*, i. 59.

1. Brotherhood is a sovereign word in the vocabulary of humanity. It has stood for vast things in the past, and has a shining destiny before it. It was one of the watchwords of the 'red fool fury of the Seine'; the last of the triplet in the motto of the French Revolutionists. It is to-day upon the banner which leads the advance of the race. The Revolutionists of 1798 did not forge the word or realize the idea; it was, indeed, the very last word they proved able to practise. If ever an idea was betrayed by its advocates it was in Paris, when brother betrayed brother to death, and groups of brethren conspired against one another; and the whole movement perished in the wild welter of blood on the guillotine or in the Bastille. The harvest of brotherhood can never be in hate and blood; but the seed was sown, though many suns may rise and set before the harvest can be garnered.

Brotherhood alone will solve the complex social and international problems of our day. For brotherhood alone can dissolve the suspicions, the callousness, the hatred of men's hearts. It is an integral element of the Kingdom of God, which in part has already come to the world, but still awaits its completeness and splendour. The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of Love; and it comes to-day whenever one man looks into the eyes of another, and from his heart can call him 'Brother.' It knows no barriers erected by education or wealth or tastes; it cannot be shut out by racial colour or temperament; its roots are lying too deep to be torn up. When we look up and call God Our Father, by that self-same act we unite ourselves to all His creatures, for they also are His offspring. Was not St Francis wholly Christian when he called the little birds his 'sisters' and the ass his 'brother'? Does not the Kingdom of God include all that God loves?

> He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all.

¶ Once whilst travelling in France, in a train I sat opposite a Frenchman who sought to converse, but the conversation flagged through our imperfect command of one another's language. Our would-be friend at last, pointing his finger upwards, said, 'Père'; and then, waving his hand to signify our connexion, said, 'Frères.' We Englishmen could not miss his meaning. The brotherhood of man is based indestructibly on the Fatherhood of God.[1]

2. The Lord's Supper proclaims the same truth, but supplies an incentive from the common realization of the Saviourhood of Christ. It proclaims the needs and the satisfactions which men may find in Christ. In Christ they share a common grace and possess a common life. At His table, as nowhere else, the second word of the French Revolutionary motto finds its fulfilment, for all men are equal. Every artificial and conventional distinction disappears. Here men stand for what they are: possessions are nothing, fame is nothing, social castes are nothing. Each is dowered with the liberty of a son of God. Here indeed is fulfilled 'liberty, equality, brotherhood.'

The strong teaching of St John's First Epistle about loving our brother is but an unfolding of this central idea of the Lord's Supper. St John tells us how inseparable the love of God is from the love of man. 'If a man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' 'whoso hath this world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?' The antithesis to Christ is Cain, with his brutal callousness and self-centredness; 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Love to God is not a profession of the lips, but is to be revealed by love to man. With St John, to live is to love, and Browning has truly caught the Apostle's heart when he makes him say:

> For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
> And hope and fear,—believe the aged friend,—
> Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
> How love might be, hath been indeed, and is.

The awakener of love is God as seen in Christ's self-sacrifice at Calvary, Christ seen as propitiation. This is at the heart of the Lord's Supper, this is what we celebrate and commemorate, for by His death we have life, and by the way of Calvary we have access and enter into communion with God. As we receive the new life our hearts swell with love, for that new life is

[1] E. J. Ives, *The Pledges of His Love*, 81.

love. The exhibition of the Divine love strikes us as the light struck Memnon's harp and wakened music. To realize the Divine love in Christ, to be partakers of the Divine nature, creates the necessity to love all. And since life is activity, love also seeks to practise every moment the activity of brotherhood.

Dig channels for the streams of Love,
And let them broadly run,
And Love hath overflowing streams
To fill them every one.
But if at any time thou cease
Those channels to provide,
The very streams of Love for thee
Will soon be parched and dried.
For we must share if we would keep
That good thing from above;
Ceasing to give, we cease to have—
Such is the law of Love.

3. Brotherhood has a centre; has it a circumference? The disciples of Christ are banded into Churches. But what is the Church? Without entering into this jungle of prickly discussion, let us say that all those who have the spirit of Christ, or 'name the name of Christ and depart from evil,' are the Church, whether organized into communities or not, and hence constitute the Brotherhood of Christ. They are one in the Head, the Divine Elder Brother. The old sad days when the unity of Christ's disciples was understood to mean unity of opinion and uniformity of creed and discipline are slowly passing away. There is a growing agreement that the unity is to be found in the common denominator of fellowship in hymnology, books of devotion, scholarship and social service.

True Catholicism can never be of the head, it must always be of the heart, like brotherhood. Carlyle reports that he once walked some miles with his friend, John Sterling, 'except in opinion not disagreeing.' Real brotherhood will bridge the chasm which the stream of opinion may make. If we really receive the Spirit and the Life of God it will be shown by brotherhood in all things.

Thou, Who at Thy first Eucharist didst pray
That all Thy Church might be for ever one,
Grant us at every Eucharist to say,
With longing heart and soul, 'Thy will be done.'
Oh, may we all one bread, one body be,
Through this blest sacrament of unity.

But brotherhood like this knows no circumference. It is not for the brotherly and lovable alone. It was said of Sir Walter Scott that he spoke to every man 'as if he were a blood relation.' There is an apocryphal saying of St Paul, that Christ was 'the only one who sympathized with a world that had lost its way.' The Elder Brother had the shepherd's heart for the lost sheep; and our brotherhood can never be perfect till it goes out to those outside 'the household of faith,' towards the sheep that is lost. The brotherhood of need is the inspiration to the brotherhood of service.

The Holy Supper is kept indeed
In whatso we share with another's need.

There are many forces making for brotherhood to-day, but not one has such motive power, such a dynamic, as that created by the Christian religion in its holiest service. For they have no incentives to the creation of brotherhood such as Christ can supply. If it be real, brotherhood means self-limitation, self-surrender, self-giving; sacrificial-thinking as well as sacrificial-living; it means each gives his best for the good of all, and the interest of each is the interest of all. And where in the whole range of life have men such a motive, example, and appeal for noble and great living as in the self-sacrifice of Him who came not to be ministered unto but to be a brother? In the presence of the self-giving Christ we hear the call to 'imitate God as dear children.'

Moral Impossibilities

1 Cor. x. 21.—'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.'

1. The Apostle is thinking here of the pagan religions from which the Corinthians had been converted, and amid which they lived. It was not only Christianity that had its sacraments, paganism had sacraments too. The Apostle could see in his mind's eye a company of worshippers go up to the temple of Aphrodite or Apollo. He could see them sprinkled with lustral water, and standing by in sacred silence

while the victim was slain in sacrifice; he could see them join in the songs and dances that filled up the time between the sacrifice itself and the preparation of the sacramental meal, and that reflected the religious mood of the festival; he could see them at last give themselves up to the joy of the meal which crowned the festal day in honour of the god. We know pretty well what this meal was. Aristotle derives the Greek verb which means 'to be drunk' from the words which mean 'after the sacrifice'; it was a scene of revelling and excess; Paul calls it 'the cup of devils,' 'the table of devils,' and pronounces participation in it inconsistent with participation in the table and the cup of the Lord.

To-day, when the science of Comparative Religion has taught us to look upon the faiths of other peoples with a larger sympathy and charity than once was possible, some will be disposed to resent the uncompromising harshness of the Apostle's language; they will say that it is neither just nor true to speak of the old Greek religion as a religion of devils. It should be remembered, however, that St Paul is speaking of the ancient paganism not as a modern professor of the science of religion, but as a missionary; not as it might be in theory and ideal, but as it actually was in the life of a gay, luxurious city like Corinth.

¶ 'The Early Church,' says Mr Chesterton, in his book on *St Francis of Assisi*, 'called the gods of paganism devils, and the Early Church was perfectly right. Whatever natural religion may have had to do with their beginnings, nothing but fiends now inhabited those hollow shrines.'

2. Our interest, however, is in the application of St Paul's words to ourselves and to the conditions of our own life. Is it necessary to say to *us*, 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils'?

Surely to ask this question is to answer it. We do not see, indeed, in our streets the temples or the altars of false gods; at least we do not see the names of the false gods written upon them. But that is part of our peril. It is easy enough, as one of our most brilliant Greek scholars has put it, to say that there are no such persons as Bacchus and Aphrodite; the real question is, Are there no such things? Are there no powers in the world in which we live which are radically and finally hostile to Christ? Is it not as true now as when the New Testament was written that our wrestle is not with flesh and blood—not simply with other human creatures like ourselves, whom we could fight, so to speak, with our hands—but against influences which are far more subtle, pervasive, and powerful than that of another human will—against a poisonous moral atmosphere which chokes the very life of Christ in the soul? Such an atmosphere was created for the Corinthians by the old heathen worship and its associations; for us, it may be created in other ways, yet be none the less fatal to our communion with Christ.

Probably the cup of devils is still drunk most frequently under the sign of liberty. Even a Christian man says to himself that everything in human life ought to be of interest to him. It belongs to his intelligence to concern itself with all the experiences of his kind, and the most attractive way to look at these experiences is in literature. This is the mirror in which life is reflected, and it cannot be wrong to gaze into it. It is indeed the mark of a large and liberal intelligence to have the amplest toleration here; to allow the mind to familiarize itself with all that has been said and thought by human beings; to cultivate breadth, appreciation, geniality; to avoid a censorious and puritanic temper. The world that is good enough for God should be good enough for us, and we should not be too good to take it as it is.

It is by pleas like these, or in a mood like this, that men and women who have drunk the cup of the Lord allow themselves to drink the cup of devils. They deliberately breathe a poisoned spiritual air as if it could do them no harm. But it does do harm. There are bad books in the world, just as there are bad men, and a Christian cannot afford to take either the one or the other into his bosom. There are books, and books of genius too, which should not be read, because they should never have been written. The first imagination and conception of them was sin, and the sin is revived when they are conceived again in the mind even of a Christian reader.

¶ This is what Sir George Sitwell says about a lovely but dangerous garden in Italy: 'It is an enchanted pool in a fairy woodland. But the traveller who has wandered here alone on a drowsy afternoon does not linger to listen to the trickle of the fountain and the murmuring

of the bees. From below the threshold of the mind a strange sense of hidden danger oppresses him, an instinct neither to be reasoned with nor to be understood. . . . He waits and wrestles with his folly, then sadly descending the slippery stairways, leaves cooling fount and shaded alley for the torrid sunshine of the outer world. *It is death to sleep in the garden.*'[1]

There is a strange persistence in the idea that all things are lawful in this region, and that it is in some way a sign of moral weakness to put a limit to one's liberty. And this makes it the more dangerous. Christ, it was said by some one writing on Pascal, has two great enemies, the god Priapus and the god Pan. You can get to the end of it with the first, the author of this observation thought, but never with the second. You can vanquish sensuality in its gross forms, but can never quite get over the idea that the world is one, and that it can do you no harm to regard everything that is in it, especially when it is presented to you in the form of literature, with indulgent toleration. Such indulgent toleration is the cup of devils, and it can never be compatible with the cup of the Lord. The Lord died for the difference between right and wrong, to which this mental temper would render us indifferent; and we drink of His cup that we may be conformed to His death. Nothing has value for a Christian, he can count nothing but loss, if it impairs the reality, the certainty, and the worth of his experiences at the table of the Lord.

[1] *An Essay on the Making of Gardens.*

3. No doubt some might be found to argue that the violence of Paul's language here is due to idiosyncrasies of the man, and that we find a more serene and impartial look at life in the words of Jesus. The Lord, it may be said, is more genial, and has a more sympathetic appreciation of life as it is. But surely this is the very reverse of the truth. The most severe and inexorable things that are said in the New Testament about the impossibility of combining the life of discipleship with any such indulgent toleration of all that men call natural are the things said by Jesus. He is the great teacher of separation, of renunciation, of the Cross. 'If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.' All things are not lawful for us if we wish to remain in the Lord's company and to share in His life.

As surely as we would have Christ and the atonement, the judgment and the mercy of God, the Spirit of holiness and the hope of heaven remain real to us, so surely must we renounce the things which cast on all these the shadow of unreality or insignificance, and neutralize in our life their redeeming power. It is our Lord Himself who says to us, 'Cut them off, *for your life*!'

CHRISTIAN EXPEDIENCY

1 Cor. x. 23.—All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

Expediency is a word of ill omen. It is regarded with suspicion by plain honest folk. For it is generally understood to imply the sacrifice of moral principle for the sake of gaining some lower end. Thus Sir Victor Horsley's biographer says of him, 'He despised expediency, he believed in principles.'[1] Many straightforward people have no patience with the least suggestion of expediency. A thing, they would say, is either right or wrong, and there's an end of it. But the moral life is not nearly so simple as that. There is, doubtless, the eternal distinction between right and wrong, which must never be transgressed; but there are also degrees of good and ill. As the Shorter Catechism says, 'Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.'[1] That is, there may be not only a bad but also a worse. So, on the other side of the line there

[1] S. Paget, *Sir Victor Horsley*, 276.

[1] Q. 83.

may be not only a good but also a better. Accordingly, in the wide variety of things that are good and lawful, ample room is left for the bringing in of other considerations which may influence a man's choice. For instance, one thing may be more useful than another, or more beautiful, or in some way better adapted to the end in view. For any of these reasons it may be preferred.

Such preferences are of daily occurrence in every man's life, and they are of the essence of expediency. The times when we are faced with a simple choice between right and wrong are few in number in comparison with the times when we are faced with a complex choice between things which for various reasons are more or less to be preferred. There is, therefore, need for a careful consideration of the doctrine of expediency, so that we may have guidance not only in our choice of right and wrong, but also in our choice between the good and the better. Expediency is in itself a morally neutral and colourless word, for it simply means whatever *expedites* or promotes the end in view. All depends on what the end is which is in view. If it be a base and unworthy end, then the expediency which promotes it is of that worldly type which is the detestation of all honest men. But if the end in view be lofty and unselfish, then there comes in that higher expediency which the Apostle is commending here. It may be well to distinguish clearly between them.

I

WORLDLY EXPEDIENCY

This it is which has given to expediency its bad name. Justice is violated, moral principle is sacrificed in order that some worldly end may be attained. A shocking example was given by the Germans in the violation of Belgium. 'Gentlemen,' said the Chancellor of Germany, addressing the Reichstag, 'we are now in a state of necessity, and necessity knows no law. . . . Anybody who is threatened as we are threatened, and is fighting for his highest possessions, can have only one thought —how he is to hack his way through.' In other words, the State is the supreme end; when its interests are at stake the moral law must go. This type of expediency has been widely practised in the affairs of State. It led Clive to forge the Red Treaty, and Lord Salisbury to lie solemnly in the House of Lords regarding the secret agreement with Russia. It has also, alas, had many exponents among the rulers of the Church, and has been elevated to the dignity of a moral system by the Jesuits. Perhaps it is not to be wondered at that men who feel that the great interests of Church and State have been entrusted to them should, in the weakness of human nature, imagine that these interests can on occasion be best served by some deviation from the straight path of righteousness. None the less the moral sense of humanity has marked its disapproval by the stigma it has attached to the names of politician and ecclesiastic.

In the sphere of private life this expediency finds its commonest expression in the saying that 'a man must live.' Perhaps he is in business and feels that he cannot keep up with his competitors if he is too strictly honest. Some practice may not be quite straight, but from the money-making point of view it is expedient. Some position has to be attained, some success to be gained, some pleasure enjoyed, or some loss avoided at all costs. And so everything, even the moral law itself, is counted subordinate, and nothing is of any account except in so far as it contributes to the end in view. When a man has thus set a wrong aim before him there is really no length to which he will not go in wrongdoing. And so expediency has come to be regarded as something repulsive, the deceiver's weapon and the coward's refuge.

Now it need not be said that St Paul was the last man in the world to have any traffic with this detestable doctrine. Indeed, by some modern critics he is 'described as hard and inflexible, and as incapable of anything like compromise and accommodation under any circumstances.'[1] Certainly on matters of principle he was adamant. When, for example, the Christian rights of the Gentiles were imperilled by the demand that Titus should be circumcised, St Paul was unbending. 'We gave place by subjection,' he says, 'no, not for an hour.' Or again, at Antioch, when Peter thought it no longer expedient to eat with the Gentiles after certain stricter Jews had come from Jerusalem, then Paul 'withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.' No

[1] R. Roberts, in Hastings' *D.A.C.*, i. 386.

man who ever lived had less of the spirit of worldly expediency. To him the moral law was inviolable. No sinful course was to be followed under any pretence, or any stress of circumstance however dire. Persecution, loss, death itself might come, but right is right and must be upheld.

II

CHRISTIAN EXPEDIENCY

What, then, is the expediency of which the Apostle here speaks? It has to do only with things which are lawful, and it may be defined as the choice, from among lawful things, of the thing which is best. 'The question of expediency or inexpediency does not arise when the Christian's choice is between good and evil; in that case the decision is, or should be, a foregone conclusion. But there are actions or habits which in themselves are neither good nor bad, which derive their moral quality from time and circumstance and degree. There are times, for instance, when it is expedient for a man to sleep, and times when it is inexpedient.'[1] Where such a choice arises, the Christian man must exercise his discretion, and, purging his heart from all unworthy motives, determine, under the guidance of the Spirit of Christ, what, in all the circumstances, is best to be done.

How remote this spirit is from that of worldly expediency may be illustrated by the case of Caiaphas and of Jesus, both of whom used the word. Caiaphas, plotting with the rulers to compass the destruction of Jesus, said, 'It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people.' There you have the expediency of statecraft, stooping to murder to achieve its end. About the same time Jesus gathered His trembling disciples in the Upper Room and reassured them in regard to His approaching death, saying, 'It is expedient for you that I go away.' There you have the expediency of heavenly love, aiming at the good of others and the salvation of the world.

1. *Paul's Favourite Preposition.*—The word which the Apostle actually uses has a special flavour about it by reason of the fact that it has prefixed to it his favourite preposition. This is the Greek word *syn-*, meaning, 'together with.' It occurs in such words of Greek origin as synopsis (a summary that can be read at one glance), sympathy (a suffering together with), etc. In the flexibility of the Greek language this preposition can readily be prefixed to nouns and verbs, giving much added richness of meaning. Prefixed to a noun it signifies comradeship, prefixed to a verb it signifies co-operation. Paul shows a remarkable fondness for these compounds, and uses them on every possible occasion. Thus he speaks of fellow-workers, fellow-soldiers, fellow-prisoners, fellow-partakers, fellow-citizens, fellow-heirs, etc.; and again with verbs we have, work together, build together, suffer together, rejoice together, sit together, reign together, etc.—all this indicating that Paul had the social sense in the highest degree, and was always conscious of himself as belonging to a great community. Of Gladstone his biographer says that he slept and woke with the thought of the universe ever present to him. So it might be said of Paul that he slept and woke with the thought of the Kingdom of God. Now, the word which we translate 'expedient' is one of his favourite compounds, meaning to 'bring in a contribution to the common good.' This is the question which Paul continually put to himself, and would have all Christians put, in regard to any lawful course of action. What contribution will it make to the common good? He makes his meaning clear by two illustrative texts in this Epistle.

2. *Efficiency.*—'All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any' (1 Cor. vi. 12). In other words, will it contribute to my efficiency as a Christian man, or will it bring me into bondage? There is a play upon the words here, which may perhaps be rendered, 'This thing is in my power, but I must take care that it does not end by getting me into its power.' This is what often happens when liberty is stretched unduly and lawful things are pursued to excess. Regarding Dr Dale's fondness for his pipe it is said, 'Food and drink he could forego without a pang; cut off from tobacco, he was little better than a lost soul.' Without taking this remark too seriously, it may yet be said that where any lawful thing has established such a hold upon the desires and the will, it has gained the mastery, and filched from the man his Christian liberty. And this is no rare occurrence. 'It

[1] J. Muir, *War and Christian Duty*, 91.

is perfectly amazing,' says Dr F. B. Meyer, 'how pastimes which are perfectly innocent and natural gain such a hold upon people as to fascinate them, and make them absolutely unfit for serious work.'[1] Japanese wrestlers have a cunning trick whereby, instead of resisting their antagonist, they suddenly join forces with him and pull him forward headlong to a fall. The devil, if one may say so, is an adept at this game. To use an American expression, he 'jollies you along,' until through the full and care-free indulgence of your Christian liberty he brings you into bondage. Hence the Apostle's warning. This or that may in itself be lawful, but is it expedient? Is it doing me good, or is it getting too big a hold on me? Is it making me a better man, a more efficient helper of God and of my fellows?

3. *The Kingdom of God.*—'All things are lawful, but all things edify not' (1 Cor. x. 23). Here the question is, Does it contribute to the Kingdom of God, does it build up the body of Christ? No Christian is entitled to use his liberty as if he dwelt alone, for 'no man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself.' Each is a member of the body of Christ, a vital part of the Christian community. Now, in the body every act of every member has its influence, for good or ill, upon the whole. So is it in the Church, which is the body of Christ, and so is it in the body of our humanity. We simply cannot divest ourselves of our corporate unity with others, and we dare not ignore the influence which our actions and way of life will have upon them. No doubt there are times when a rebel spirit springs up within the heart and demands why individual liberty should be thus cribbed and confined. But for a Christian to yield to such a spirit would be treason against the great cause.

On the other hand, what more exalted aim could a Christian have than that of edifying, helping to build up the fabric of our human life which sin has laid in ruins? 'The Christman's burden is the building of an ordered empire and kingdom of heaven out of our broken and disordered life.'[2] In the chosen servants of Christ this has been the ruling passion, to which all else has been made subordinate, and which has led them on to the topmost heights of self-sacrifice. It was this passion that sent Livingstone forth to Africa, Carey to India, Morrison to China. It was the ceaseless urge of this passion that impelled Paul on his journeys, laid upon his heart the care of all the churches, and constrained him to become the servant of all for Christ's sake, willing, as he says, to 'please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.' Above all, it was the spirit of our Lord Himself, who said, 'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' He did not exercise His liberty to the full, but on the contrary He humbled Himself and took the place of a servant. And His example becomes our rule of life; as the Apostle says elsewhere, 'Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself' (Rom. xv. 2, 3).

[1] *Christian World Pulpit*, lxxx. 350.
[2] G. A. Johnston Ross, in *Christian World Pulpit*, lxxii. 403.

III

THE LAW OF FULL SURRENDER

It thus appears that Christian expediency, so far from being a dubious thing, is the supreme law of Christian living, the law of full surrender. It denotes a readiness to subordinate every private interest to the supreme interest of the Kingdom of God. It is the law according to which we hold ourselves bound to judge every action and course of conduct, not in reference to its pleasantness or profitableness to ourselves, but in reference to the contribution it may make to the building up of the body of Christ. 'Who cares about the Free Church,' exclaimed Dr Chalmers, 'compared with the Christian good of the people of Scotland? Who cares about any church, but as an instrument of Christian good?' In a like spirit the Apostle would have us say, 'Who cares for the enjoyment of any pleasure, or the attainment of any end, save as it can be made an instrument of Christian good?'[1]

The application of this law is, obviously, as wide as life, and perhaps there never was a time when it needed more earnestly to be pressed home upon the Christian conscience. For, undoubtedly, the tendency of to-day is

[1] W. Hanna, *Memoirs of Dr Chalmers*, ii. 681.

to enjoy Christian liberty to the full, and to resent any restriction being laid upon it. The first half of the apostolic injunction, 'all things are lawful,' receives a very liberal interpretation; the second half, 'but all things are not expedient,' seems often to be quite forgotten. One need only mention the great liberties which many Christians take in their use of the Lord's Day, and the great lengths they go in the pursuit of various pleasures and pastimes. An attitude commonly taken up is to ask, 'What harm is there in this or that? Is it not lawful in itself? And if I wish to do it, there is no more to be said.'

Now, it cannot be too clearly understood that any one who takes up that attitude and judges conduct in that way has yet to learn the A B C of the Christian life. You may be a member of the Christian Church, but you have not yet caught a glimmer of the spirit of Christ. 'No more to be said!' There is much more to be said. Everything relevant to the Christian life remains to be said. 'What harm is there in it?' O, mean and grovelling question! Is that all your ambition, just to keep out of harm's way, just to keep your nose out of the mire of sin? 'What harm is there in it?' Nay, rather, ask, 'What good is there in it?' That is the only question worthy of a Christian man. It is lawful, but is it expedient? Will it make any positive contribution to the Kingdom of God? Will you be the better for doing it? Will the Church of which you are a member, and the community in which you dwell be the better?

'What we need in the Christian Church to-day,' said Henry Van Dyke, 'is a revival of the patriotism of the Kingdom of God.' There is our ideal—'patriotism of the Kingdom of God,' a spirit of utter loyalty to the cause, which is ready to do and to dare all without counting the cost, ready, if need be, to throw every other interest on the scrap-heap in obedience to the heavenly vision. Surely it is time that all this chatter about liberties, and the enjoyment of rights, and the lengths to which a man may go, should cease among Christian folk, and more should be heard about the glory of self-sacrifice and the advancement of the cause of Christ.

A Scottish working man put the matter with rare insight in a homely illustration. He said, 'When I first went to the unemployment bureau it was all a wild scramble, where the strong pushed the weak to the wall. That was barbarism. The next time I went back the men were formed up in a queue. That was law and order, a great improvement, as great as civilization is over barbarism. But (he added after a pause) there is something higher still. If I see a brother in need, I can give up my place in the queue. And that is the law of Christ.'

Spoken like a Christian man! '*I can give up my place in the queue.*' The place is mine. I have a right to keep it, and enjoy all the advantage that accrues from it. And if I choose to keep it, who has any business to say a word? But then, on the other hand, I can give it up, in the spirit of Him who gave up His place in glory for my salvation. That is my privilege, and in certain circumstances it becomes my Christian duty. For I have learned of Christ that I must love my neighbour as myself, that I must seek first the Kingdom of God, that if I would save my life I shall lose it, but if I be willing to lose my life for His sake and the Gospel's I shall surely keep it unto life eternal. And so, by His grace, I fain would be, in however humble a way, His fellow-worker, and make my contribution, however small, to the great realm of love which is yet to be.

J. H. Morrison.

Everyday Life

1 Cor. x. 31.—'Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.'

We all know that the aim and end of the Christian life is set forth by these words of St Paul: 'Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' That is the ideal, and though we almost tremble as we look at the ideal, we cannot deny it, and we dare not fling it aside. When we say that Christ is all in all, we mean that the Christian life should be all in all, that in every department and chamber of it, Christian thought should rule, and that through every window of it, from cellar to attic, a sacramental light should shine.

Now, of course, our actual Christian life falls far below this. The best of us have to confess

that our life is split up into two parts, which have often little in common. Our sanctuary life is full of devotion and faith, while our life in the world is crowded with common cares and vulgar ambitions, and has little of heavenly light upon its countenance. We read in the old story that the land into which the Israelites were brought was a land of valleys and hills, of low levels and high levels, and nowhere any broad stretch of elevated table land. That was of a piece with their religious experience, and it is not an unfit picture of ours. We spend most of our time in the valleys, and only visit the hills, like worn and exhausted city dwellers, to reinvigorate our drooping spiritual forces. There is something in the ordinary Christian life, of busy men at least, which reminds us of those soldier-bishops of the Middle Ages who one day donned their coats of mail and flung themselves into the awful scrimmage, fighting like very fiends for carnal spoil, and the next day were kneeling in white vestments before the altar, with calm apostolic faces, and words of love and mercy on their lips. There are times when we could do and suffer all things for Christ, when we would sell all that we have to secure His favour; and other times when the feeblest sneer is sufficient to make us totally deny Him, and the smallest temptation enough to break the back of our faith. These variations come in a measure to all.

¶ Dr Arnold of Rugby confessed: 'There are whole days on which all the feelings and principles of belief and religion are in abeyance, when it would be difficult to discover one particle of Christian principle in our whole mind, it seems all moved out, and our Christian living a life of virtual atheism.'

Christ asks for a sort of omnipresence in the life of faith. His spirit seeks admission everywhere. His power avails for the details of life, as well as for its great principles and actions. The tremendous forces of gravitation and attraction which keep the whole solar system in poise bind the particles of a grain of sand in beautiful cohesion. Going through some factories you can see a gas engine at work, so beautifully arranged that while it raises the hoist and drives all the great machinery, it performs also the most trivial duties, oiling itself in every part by its own power, dipping the smallest possible brush into the smallest possible oil tin, and dropping almost invisible drops upon almost invisible wheels, to make them move smoothly and noiselessly. And the Saviour intended Himself to be a power like that, mighty enough to strengthen us for the heaviest burdens, and fortify us for the severest duties, yet humbling itself to oil and smooth our lowest actions, and to glorify the most insignificant details of life. And, indeed, it is almost as Ruskin said: 'The religion which is not good for every thing is hardly good for any thing.'

¶ With Stevenson there is no separation of life into departments of secular and sacred. He even scorns the general type of the 'novel with a purpose,' in which 'we see the moral forced into every hole and corner of the story, or thrown externally over it like a carpet over a railing.' His religion was as wide as his human life: 'I feel every day that religion has a greater interest for me; but that interest is still centred on the little rough-and-tumble world in which our fortunes are cast for the moment.' [1]

¶ 'God,' said George MacDonald, 'never gave man a thing to do concerning which it were irreverent to ponder how the Son of God would have done it.'

Let us see, then, the Christian ideal in everyday life. Our daily work is by Divine commandment. It is not something that God allows us to do when we are not worshipping. It is His ordinance that we should all work at something—'Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work.' And the man who is inexcusably idle, or who belittles his work, even in the interest, as he thinks, of religion, is breaking this commandment as truly as he who neglects the other half of it and dishonours the Sabbath day.

No one will accuse the Apostle Paul of any indifference or lukewarmness where true religion was concerned. Yet it was this Apostle who ordered the Thessalonians to go on with their daily occupations even though they believed, as so many did at that time, that the return of the Lord to earth was just at hand. By our daily work we serve the Lord as truly as when we gather to His worship.

The Lord's own life is the everlasting model of this. For thirty years He worked at His trade as a carpenter. If only we would let

[1] J. Kelman, *The Faith of R. L. Stevenson*, 10.

that fact soak into us, it would alter our whole idea of the relation of our daily work to religion. Jesus worked Himself. And we have interesting indirect proof as to what manner of life He lived on those workaday levels that we all know so much about. For to the Carpenter of Nazareth there came a day when, in Nazareth itself, He stood forth as representative of a morality and religion higher than ever was proclaimed before. He spoke as one having authority to men about the true way to live. And there were many who so resented what they deemed His presumption that anything that reflected on His claims or belittled His authority would gladly have been seized upon and made the most of. Had there been in Nazareth a door of unseasoned wood or a badly made chest, would it not have been produced to discredit His mission? If any one could have been found with whom the Carpenter had not dealt honourably and justly, if there had been anything that weakened His claim to guide and teach His brethren, would they not have found it out and taxed Him with it? But there was nothing of that. Jesus faced His fellows with His daily duty behind Him, and it reinforced every word He said. He spoke of religion as no other son of man ever did, but He lived it long before He ever opened His mouth. He brought religion down to the workshop and the street, and showed men what it meant there. Well may the Moravians pray in their litany, 'May the precious sweat of Thy labour lighten our toil,' and again, 'May Thy faithfulness in Thy handicraft make us faithful in our share of labour.'

Our daily work is sanctified by the fact that our Lord and Master is with us, to help and strengthen us there, as truly as when we pray. Jesus Christ is not far away from us amid the dust of business, when we must keep our temper and follow conscience along the hard way, and deal honourably with all men. He is near us there also, ready and willing to help us to be true to God and man on that road which once He trod Himself.

They who tread the path of labour follow where
My feet have trod;
They who work without complaining do the
holy will of God.
Where the many toil together, there am I
among my own;
Where the tired workman sleepeth, there am I
with Him alone.
I, the peace that passeth knowledge, dwell amid
the daily strife,
I, the bread of heaven, am broken in the sacrament of life.

As we follow the story of our Lord's life we see this great principle in action. We are at a loss to say which of His deeds and words were more and which were less religious. No such divisions as sacred and secular are to be found here. He had no high and low levels alternating. It was all exalted. He gave thanks when He took bread, and when He lifted children in His arms, and when He sat at meat with publicans and sinners. He seems to have been as near to heaven when He plucked ears of corn, or watched a woman leavening meal, or looked on a field of lilies, or took the coin from the fish's mouth to drop into the imperial treasury, as when He was kneeling in prayer on the mountain side or teaching in the Temple. He was doing His Father's business when, as a boy, He questioned the doctors, and when, as a man, He sat at a wedding feast, as surely as when He healed diseases, spoke His immortal words of wisdom to the disciples, or drank the cup in Gethsemane. His life had no varying degrees of holiness. It was all on the same high level. And even St Paul, according to his human measure, reached this uniformity of Christian thought and service. It has often been a surprise to readers of his Epistles to find in the very midst of his most sublime discourses references to what we should deem small and worldly matters; such, for instance, as the food and drink which it will be good for the sick Timothy to take; such as his own occupation of tent-making, or the cloak and parchment which he left at Ephesus, and which he begs that they will send him. There seems to be an incongruity between these trivial things and the noble and heavenly regions of thought in which his mind is moving. But there was no incongruity to him, because he had learned to look upon every action of his life as a religious act. The name of the Lord was written upon them all. The spirit and motive exalted them. They were all done to the glory of God.

The Imitation of Christ

1 Cor. xi. 1.—'Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ' (R.V.).

The imitation of Christ is of necessity imposed on every Christian. Christianity is, or ought to be, the reproduction and perpetuation of Christ's life on earth; to be a Christian in the simplest sense of the word is to be Christ-like; if we are to take our calling seriously, and if our Christianity is to be more than a name, we must all be, with St Paul, imitators of Christ.

But what is it that we are to imitate? The four Gospels furnish us with a many-sided picture of our Lord, and the eyes of His followers in all generations have been reverently fixed on the features there portrayed. But in the Epistles we find certain salient features of the character of Jesus that we are told to imitate in a special manner. The Epistles recognize that there is a double element in the life of Christ—the one side of which is for our imitation, while the other, being inseparably connected with the 'work which the Father had given him to do,' is altogether above and beyond us. Three of these special features of Christ's character the writers of the New Testament would have us imitate, if we are to be worthy followers of the Christ—His love, His humility and His sufferings. Let us take them in their order.

1. *We are to imitate our Lord in His love.*—This love of Christ which we are told to imitate, and therefore which we must believe we can imitate, is never a mere emotion; it is always a real, practical thing—it is something which, in commonplace circumstances and in heroic moments, seeks the practical and matter of fact good of the persons who are loved; it expresses itself in trivial things as well as in unlimited self-sacrifices; its one invariable feature is that it seeks the good of others. We are told, for example, to 'receive one another, even as Christ also received us, to the glory of God' (Rom. xv. 7). Receive—the bare English word almost fails to suggest the delicate courtesy of the original. Take your neighbour by the hand is the meaning; receive him and treat him kindly.

If you search out the various verses in the New Testament in which this word is used, you will find all manner of tender, delicate suggestions about your ordinary dealings with your neighbours. You will find that you are to make the best of every one; that you are to make allowances for people; that you are to cultivate a delicate tact; that you are not only to do kind deeds, but to do them in a kindly fashion. That is to imitate Christ. We often forget that these small things are insisted upon as part of a real imitation of Christ, and many an earnest Christian shows a defective Christian character by dealing with sensitive people in a blunt and hard manner.

¶ At an up-country place the Archbishop was on the point of leaving at 6.30 a.m. one winter morning by Cape cart, when three of the girls whom he had confirmed came to say 'Goodbye.' The thought in his hostess's mind, as she herself put it, was, 'Oh, bother those girls!' But he said at once, 'How very nice of you to come and see me off.' 'It was this ever-present and gracious kindliness,' is the comment of a friend, 'which touched our hearts so much and made us think of the love of Christ. He was naturally kind, but he took trouble to be kinder still.'[1]

Then we are told 'to walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell' (Eph. v. 2). This points to a higher grade of the imitation in love—something which involves a real sacrifice on our part. It does not seem that the reference is to the supreme sacrifice of our Lord on the Cross; but to those minor sacrifices which always go to make up the perfect life which He lived in the presence of God the Father and of men. Whatever be the precise meaning of the reference to sacrifice, the meaning of the text is evident, so far as our conduct goes. We are to imitate the love of Christ, which puts away all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour. We are to be ready to forgive injuries; we are to fight against all lusts of the flesh. We are to be as lovingly neglectful of self and as lovingly heedful of our neighbours as Christ was.

Then, to quote one more command, we are told that 'Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren' (1 John iii. 16). We are to imitate Christ in love by doing, if

[1] M. H. M. Wood, *William West Jones, D.D., Archbishop of Capetown*, 464.

required, that supreme act of self-devotion which counts life itself of less value than the manifestation of active love to our neighbour.

¶ On a certain island sleeping sickness has broken out; the people are being swept away in increasing numbers, and there is no one to carry to them the message of the Gospel. The peril is obvious. The message can only be carried at the cost of tremendous sacrifice. Rakeri, a young Muganda woman, stands up unflinching and unafraid. She volunteers to go and teach the women and children: 'These people are dying and know nothing of Christ, the Saviour of the world; I know and love Him, and must go and tell them of Him.'

She starts off, this African woman with the glad conviction of a new self-surrender triumphing over the bondage of centuries. The months slip by; she stays at her post faithfully teaching and living the message of love, till one day the news comes that she is ill. She is carried up to the hospital at Mengo and the fatal verdict is pronounced, 'sleeping sickness.' But even now Rakeri continues her ministry of love. She passes from bed to bed in the women's ward, reading and praying with the patients and seeking to soothe them in their pain. 'And all the while,' writes Bishop Tucker, 'she was a dying woman.' [1]

It is the example of Christ which threads together these various instances of love, from tender courtesy to death for others, and makes them all elements of one and the same thing. He in His life has lived them all into one harmonious whole, and made us see the whole virtue, not broken, disjointed fragments of it. He has forbidden us, by His silent example, to detach any one portion and magnify it at the expense of the others and to the detriment of the whole life to be lived after His example.

2. *We are to imitate our Lord in His humility.*—'Let the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being originally in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped at to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man' (Phil. ii. 5, 6). 'Learn of me,' says our Lord Himself, 'for I am meek and lowly in heart' (Matt. xi. 29). This humble-mindedness is something which we may almost say Jesus Himself introduced into the world. It is true that the word existed before our Lord's advent, but it did not signify a virtue in any system of pagan ethics. 'The instances are few and exceptional in which the word signifies aught else than that which is grovelling, slavish, and mean-spirited.' But it was part of the mission of Christ to exalt the meek and humble, and He so delivered this despised Christian grace from the dishonour which had formerly clung to it as to make it not only a grace, but, as St Basil says, the special casket in which all other virtues are contained.

In His human nature our Lord was the pattern not only of obedience but also of humility and of dependence. His life was a constant living on the fullness of the Father's love; resting on the Father's promises; outpouring His burdened human soul to the Father in prayer. It is to be part of our imitation of Christ that we too must have the sense of our own absolute dependence on God. And if our imitation be more than an external thing, it must include in it what was not in Christ's. He was sinless, we are sinful; and to the general sense of dependence there must be added that special dependence on the pardoning grace of God, which all redeemed men must have.

¶ I suppose if I were more simple-minded I should have been thinking over my faults and failures, desiring to do better, making good resolutions. But I don't do that. I do desire, with all my heart, to do better. I know how faltering, how near the ground my flight is. But these formal, occasional repentances are useless things; resolutions do little but reveal one's weakness more patently. What I try to do is simply to uplift my heart with all its hopes and weaknesses to God, to try to put my hand in His, to pray that I may use the chances He gives me, and interpret the sorrows He may send me. He knows me utterly and entirely, my faults and my strength. I cannot fly from Him though I take the wings of the morning. I only pray that I may not harden my heart; that I may be sought and found; that I may have the courage I need. All that I have of good He has given me; and as for the evil, He knows best why I am tempted, why I fall, though I would not. There is no strength like the abasement of weakness; no power like a childlike confidence.[1]

[1] P. L. Garlick, *Uganda Contrasts*, 49.

[1] A. C. Benson, *The Upton Letters*, 317.

3. *We are to imitate Christ in His sufferings.*—Verses abound which exhort us to this. We are told that even when we do well and suffer for it, we are to take it patiently—'For,' says the Apostle, 'even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps' (1 Peter ii. 21). We are told that we must not think it strange if we experience the fires of affliction; we are rather to rejoice, 'inasmuch as we are made partakers of the sufferings of Christ' (1 Peter iv. 13). And there is that mysterious text, whose depths are beyond our sounding—'Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church' (Col. i. 24).

These verses from the Epistles make it plain that His Apostles insist that suffering must be a real part of our *imitatio Christi*. Yet it does not follow that the best way of imitating Christ is to appropriate to one's self a life of sorrow. Such an idea of the imitation of Christ misses the chief point in these exhortations. The verses all describe sufferings which are connected somehow or other with the lives of others. It is for the Church's sake that we are to fill up that which is lacking of the sufferings of Christ. There is no trace of a mention of self-inflicted pains. The sufferings in which we imitate Christ come from the wrongs which men may inflict upon us, or such as are met with in the ordinary course of the Providence of God.

It is quite unjustifiable to regard human life as a mass of pleasurable sensations, and to look on the chief end of man as the absorption of as much of these as we possibly can; but, on the other hand, it is foolish to suppose that it is a peculiarly meritorious thing or a real way of imitating Christ to renounce all pleasures because they are pleasant things. To renounce pleasure because it happens to be pleasant; to court pain because it happens to be painful—is to give an altogether unwarrantable degree of importance to mere secondary facts or accompaniments of life: to make them ends in themselves, and not means to an end.

We can imitate our Lord in His sufferings, when, in the midst of all the sorrow and trials which come upon us in the course of life, we can preserve the feeling of our nearness to God, of our absolute dependence on Him, of trust in His real Fatherhood. In His last agony our Lord could still say: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' We can imitate Him in His sufferings when neither pain nor sorrow is able to make us think that God has forsaken us or ceased to be our Father.

I said, This task is keen—
  But even while I spake, Thou, Love Divine,
Didst stand behind, and gently over-lean
My drooping form, and, oh! what task had been
Too stern for feebleness with help of Thine?
Spell Thou this lesson with me line by line,
  The sense is rigid, but the voice is dear:
Guide Thou my hand within that hand of Thine—
Thy wounded hand! until its tremblings take
Strength from Thy touch, and even for Thy sake
  Trace out each character in outline clear.[1]

The Praise of Men

1 Cor xi. 2, 17.—'I praise you. . . . I praise you not.'

THE Apostle Paul was a man whose praise was to be coveted, and whose blame was to be dreaded, because God had given him the grace of a sound mind. There are some people who are so weakly genial that they go on applauding, alike when men do not and when men do deserve their applause. And there are some who are so habitually censorious that they go on finding fault, even when they ought to see that there is room and reason for praise. St Paul was not guilty of either of these extremes; he knew when to wield the rod; he knew when to bestow the crown; and he knew the part played by human praise in human life. 'I praise you,' he sometimes said, in one form or another; 'I praise you not,' he sometimes also said, and he could say it with considerable emphasis. He knew the encouragement of a wise word of praise, and the stinging challenge of a loving rebuke, and he used that power, like all his powers, as in his Master's sight.

1. The first thing to be noticed is that the love of praise is a *natural* thing—a natural and

[1] *Sunday Afternoon Verses* (edited by W. Robertson Nicoll), 73.

healthy instinct of the human mind. Some one has called the love of praise 'the sixth sense,' and it is certainly a sense that develops about as early as any of the rest. We all know how children love praise and respond to a word of praise. It is educative in the literal meaning of that much-abused word; it draws them out and encourages timid little souls to emerge from the shell of their natural shyness. There is no reason to doubt that the instinct is on the whole healthy as well as natural. While we are intended to seek the praise of God supremely, we are not so constituted that we can, in ordinary circumstances, be content with the praise of God alone. It is healthy to desire the esteem of our fellow-men—or at any rate, as we grow older and wiser, to desire the esteem of the best among our fellow-men. Indeed, if a man too ostentatiously scorns the good opinion of his fellows, we are a little inclined to suspect his sincerity—to judge that he has fallen into the sin that Augustine warns us against when he bids us beware of glorying in the mere contempt of vainglory. And often it must mean much to us that those whose opinion is worth having should be able to say 'I praise you,' while it will darken our sky most really if they are compelled to say 'I praise you not.'

2. Now this instinct for praise, like all the other desires and capacities of our human nature, is *liable to faulty development*. And faulty development is usually one-sided development: we may err either by repression or by excess.

(1) On the one hand we may too much repress this instinct for human praise; it is quite possible to care too little what others think of us, and so to fall into many snares—a foolish eccentricity of manners, a rough fanaticism of religion, a rampant individualism which refuses to see any standpoint save its own, and tramples rough-shod upon public opinion.

¶ 'There has been gradually revealed to me (what my many readings in the lives of fanatics and ascetics ought to have taught me long before) that there is a terrible gulf ahead of that "not caring what men say." Of course it is a feeling on which the spirit must fall back in hours of need, and cry "Thou God knowest mine integrity. I have believed and therefore I will speak; Thou art true, though all men be liars!" But I am convinced that this is a frame in which no man can live, or is meant to live; that it is to be resorted to only in fear and trembling, after deepest self-examination and self-purification and earnest prayer. For otherwise a man gets to forget that voice of God without him, in his determination to listen to nothing but the voice of God within.'[1]

(2) But perhaps the temptation of most of us is towards the other extreme—of setting too much store by the praise of men, of living for that and for that only. That has been all along one of the besetting temptations of humanity. It is not wrong to seek the praise of men, if it be the praise of men whom one's conscience can respect; yet, if the praise of men and the praise of God come into conflict, the praise of God must be our supreme desire. It is sometimes a hard struggle—men are so near, God seems so far away; men can be so vocal, God seems so silent; and the dilemma becomes one of our sharpest temptations. Every kind and type of human being is fond of praise. Faber has a delightful passage in which he describes the effect of praise upon different types of character. He describes the grave and pompous man smoothing himself down under the breath of praise, like the swell of a summer sea when the south wind blows. He describes the cold man thawing, and the dignified man becoming playful, under the same influence. He goes on to say that the silent man is the greatest lover of praise: he chews self like a cud, and does not find it bitter. It is interesting to notice how this temptation enters into the experience of the saints, and frankly reveals itself in their confessions. Bunyan tells us in *Grace Abounding* how, when he turned from profaneness to live a moral life, his neighbours began to praise him. 'It pleased me mighty well,' he frankly says. 'For though, as yet, I was nothing but a poor painted hypocrite, yet I loved to be talked of as one that was truly godly. I was proud of my godliness, and indeed I did all I did either to be seen of, or to be well spoken of, by men.' Or take the case of Augustine, who, even after his conversion, found that the love of praise was one of his abiding snares and pitfalls. 'Can it ever cease throughout this whole life?' he cries, 'this wish to be loved and feared by men!' And again, 'Our daily furnace is the tongues of

[1] Kingsley.

men'—the men, obviously, who heaped upon him the blame he did not want and withheld from him the praise he coveted. And so to Augustine, as to all of us, it meant a great deal whether men said to him 'I praise you' or 'I praise you not'; he himself was conscious that it meant too much, and therefore represented an actual peril.

One of the dangers involved in loving the praise of men is a warping of the moral standard; right and wrong begin to lose their absolute character; the right thing is the thing that is applauded; the wrong thing is the thing that is not, and the only disgrace is to be found out in a fault. Indeed, the mistake may go further still. We may not only warp the moral standard; we may invert the universe, and put man in the place of God, like the Pharisees, who loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. The man who does that risks more than is worth risking, for the praise of men is fickle as the wind and may not come to him in the hour when he needs it most, even though he has sold his God in order to obtain it. That was the case of Hastings in *King Richard III.*—a man who did all things for the praise of men, and who, when he looked for golden honours, found only cruel swords awaiting him.

O momentary grace of mortal man,
Which we more hunt for than the grace of God!
Who builds his hope in air of your good looks,
Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast;
Ready with every nod to tumble down
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.

3. It seems, then, that *the path of duty*, in this matter, *lies midway between these two false extremes*—the stifling of the desire for human praise, and the exaggeration of that desire into the rule of life. We are free to welcome with a good heart any honest praise that may come to us—thanking God for it as for any other refreshing breeze that may blow across the desert, any other well of sweet water that may spring up by the wayside. And if we value it for ourselves, we should learn to understand that it is equally valuable and equally encouraging to others. We little know how much good we may do just by speaking, as we have opportunity, a word of praise.

¶ 'You don't want to be praised for doing your duty,' Carlyle once said. 'But,' says Mrs Carlyle, very naturally and prettily, 'I did, though.' 'In his early years,' says Professor Norton, who knew him at a mellower time of life, 'he had not fully learned the importance to the sum of happiness in life of frequent and frank expression, in varied mode, of the sentiment lying at the heart. But bitter experience taught him "give quickly!"'[1]

¶ In a magazine I saw a distinction drawn between what were called 'plus' and 'minus' people. Did you ever think that there are people whose most fitting symbol is a 'minus' sign? They never add to your happiness or your hopes or your faith either in yourself or in anybody else. Rather they take away from these. When they leave your company, you feel that you are somehow poorer than you were, in your own esteem, and in your belief in others. These are the 'minus' people. But there are others, thank God, of a different sort. They never come to us but they add to our store of all the best things far beyond their thought or intention. They believe in us, and so help us to do better. They draw out the best side of us, and sometimes that side surprises even ourselves. They radiate courage and hope and faith. Their praise humbles us, yet leaves us tingling with desire to be more worthy of it. I ask you, Is it not better to be 'plus' than 'minus'?[2]

Where Christ is Clearly Seen

1 Cor. xi. 23, 24.—'The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.'

1. THESE are among the most familiar words in Scripture. We have heard them and read them scores of times. They are embedded in the ritual of the most sacred act of our Christian worship. But how many of us read them with the emphasis St Paul meant to give them? 'The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread.'

Why pick out this incident from among the many others that happened that night? Was it only to fix a date? It may have been so.

[1] R. Garnett.
[2] A. Alexander, *The Glory in the Grey*, 76.

But if we look a little deeper we shall see that St Paul has something more in mind. He is not fixing a date; he is painting a picture. It is a picture of Christ in all His grace and glory. And in painting this picture he is doing what every artist does—putting in the right background. This is just as necessary in the spiritual portrait of Jesus as in any picture on canvas. If we are to study Him fairly and see Him clearly, we must have the right background. We must see Him, for instance, in relation to the times in which He lived and the circumstances in which He moved, and the men and women who crowded round Him in His own day.

But there is another background against which we must see Him, the background of human life with all its needs and troubles. There is no place where Christ does not shine—whether at a marriage feast, or in a simple home like that at Bethany, or in a situation of storm and crisis, as when the boat was nearly overwhelmed in the lake. The Gospels, in point of fact, give us a portrait of Jesus set against an ever-changing background of human life, and in every new situation some new aspect of His personality shines out, and gives to us, as we see Him there, the key to the position for the mastery of life. But there is one occasion where He is at His best, where He gives the very fullest revelation of His nature; where all that is in Him comes to its flash-point, so to speak, and His whole personality finds release. That is the situation where the world is at its worst, where sin and evil and hatred and cruelty are gathered round Him to bring Him down to death. We do not see Jesus at His greatest and deepest till we see Him against the background of Calvary. As He said Himself, looking at the oncoming shadow that was to fall over His life in a great eclipse, 'The hour is come when the Son of man should be glorified.'

What is the aspect of Christ that stands out from this background, as we watch Him breaking bread, and giving it to His disciples? Look at the background first. 'The same night in which he was betrayed.' The death of Christ may be studied from many points of view. Many things helped to bring it about. One immediate cause of it was the betrayal by His friends. With many He was a hero, and it was necessary to take Him unawares in some lonely spot. For that purpose they found a willing tool in Judas, one of these friends who were now gathered about the table in the Upper Room. We need not enter on the strange psychology of the mind of Judas. The fact remains that he became the betrayer of Jesus—he who had shared Christ's secret, who had known His intimate friendship through long weeks and months. It is the fashion to excuse Judas, and Jesus would have found something to say on his behalf. But facts are facts, and the fact is that Judas was a traitor, and treachery is the foulest of crimes. And Judas was not alone in his treachery. There was St Peter also; Christ saw the lurking possibility of it peeping out of his soul, even as they sat at table. The rest were not free from it either; they did not even go so far with Him as St Peter into the zone of danger. At the critical hour they all forsook Him and fled. That is the crude historical fact.

It is easy, of course, to judge them as George Eliot does:

> The saints were cowards who stood by to see
> Christ crucified. They should have thrown themselves
> Upon the Roman spears and died in vain
> The grandest death, to die in vain for love.

It is easy to say that. Would we have done it? We may well wonder. Do we never betray Him with the kiss of empty sentiment upon our lips, while at the same time we misrepresent Him with our lives? They lived to make magnificent amends, and that is more than can be said for many a man. But do not let us minimize what it meant for Jesus. Here He sat at meat with them, knowing, as He knew the souls of men, that they were going to fail Him at the last moment. That is the background, and now against it, let us look at Him—'The Lord Jesus took bread, and brake it and gave to His disciples, and said, This is my body broken for you.'

2. What is it that shines out here? Surely it is a love which we can do nothing else than call Divine. If you want to see love at its best, see it in the day of adversity. Will it stand the strain of conflict, of difference of opinion, of misunderstanding, of apparent neglect? Will our human love stand that strain? That tests

it. But will it do more? Will it stand the strain of treachery, of falseness, of a broken trust? It is a hard test, but it is the real test of the quality of love. And the measure in which it will endure and shine in circumstances like these, is the measure in which it is Divine. That is where the love of Christ stands out. It is there we are to look for His Divinity, not in any abstract ideas about His being of the substance or essence of God. The Divinity of Christ is revealed in the Divineness of His love.

Now what are the beams into which Calvary, like some broken crystal revealing the colours that make the light, breaks up the love of Christ so that we see its hidden glory?

(1) One of them is *forgiveness of the unforgivable.* Is there anything so unforgivable as treachery? And yet He forgave it: that is to say, He refused to let it stand between Him and them. It did stand, of course, so far as they were concerned. When Judas sat there with the crime purposed in his heart he could not know or realize the love of Christ.

Sin puts out the eyes of the spirit. Judas could not see this love for the moment; that is the charitable explanation to put upon it. Afterwards he saw; when the love had gone all lengths there came the revelation that was more than he could bear. But though there were clouds between these men and Christ, there were none on His side—nothing but goodwill—'This is my body broken for you,' He said, and all the time it was something in them which was to help to break it! 'Here is the darkest fruit of your sin,' He said in effect, 'and I make it into a gift for you, for your strengthening, for a pledge of forgiveness, that will come into your hands in the hour when your sin rises up against you like a flood of great waters, threatening to overwhelm you in depths of black despair, and your worst trouble is that you cannot forgive yourself.' Now that is the love of God—its Divine quality; it so forgives that it seeks the man who is sinning against it, with a will that does not wait for penitence, but goes out to create it. The world is so slow to learn the lesson. We speak of forgiving people after they have repented—that is our human way; and it sounds so righteous and so magnanimous. But it does not really touch the shining levels of real forgiveness. With us it means so often only the putting away of the offended spirit; it so seldom means the winning of the sinful through a goodwill which changes the heart by suffering in the sin.

> Make my forgiveness downright, such, as I
> Should perish if I did not have from Thee.
> I let the wrong go, withered up and dry,
> Cursed with divine forgetfulness in me;
> 'Tis but self-pity, pleasant, mean, and sly,
> Low whispering bids the paltry memory live,
> What am I brother for but to forgive?
> . . . . .
> Lord, I forgive—and step in unto Thee.[1]

(2) But another of those beams is *trust in the untrustworthy.* He was trusting these fallible men, trusting them though their hearts were unstable as shifting sands, trusting them to carry on His work, and to hold in their minds and hearts the message of the Kingdom. Most of us would have given them up. 'Once bitten, twice shy' is one of the maxims of worldly-wise morality. They were Christ's sole trustees. What did it mean, this gift of the bread, in the Eastern language of symbolism? It meant, 'I give you my confidence; I trust you with my friendship; I put on your shoulders the greatest trust ever laid upon men—the trust of the truth the dying world needs.' The whole meaning of our freedom is there; God trusts us. Why does not God compel? That is a common question. How is it He does not dragoon men into goodness? It is because this kind of trust is always an element in love. When love has to dictate, to compel, the bloom is lost, the power is gone. In its true form it is always an appeal to honour; it asks from us the spontaneous virtue, nothing less; it seeks the gift which comes of the heart's own unfettered impulse.

¶ I knew a splendid lad out at the front who, through illness, made a serious slip, and was court-martialled and punished. The colonel's only comment when he returned from leave, was that he was much too good a boy to be allowed to break; that the fault, being paid for, was now wiped out from his mind, and that he for one would never mention the thing to the lad, or anybody else. Nor did he: slipped at once into the old friendly relations, till the boy, who had sat white-faced waiting for the storm, being dismissed, asked what it meant. 'He says that you are far too good a lad to allow snap,' I said,

[1] George MacDonald.

'and that it is every one's business now to let you see that you are absolutely trusted by us all.' On which he looked a moment, and turned abruptly away. A few weeks later, placed in a position of danger and authority, the same in which he had failed, he carried himself with such daring and distinction as to win promotion for gallantry on the field, and other honours too. 'What could I do?' he said. 'I failed him, and he trusted me.'[1]

(3) Yet another beam of this love is its *constancy in face of man's fickleness*. How fleeting is our love to Him; how easily checked; how often dried up, like a river lost in desert sands. But His love flows on. There is a great word in St John's Gospel which illuminates this attitude of Christ, 'Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end.' To what end? To the end of life here? No! to the end of everything—to the end of the longest road of sin and selfishness by which men flee from Him. Whatever lights go out, that star shines.

A friend in sorest need,
Of kindest word and deed;
A friend whose love flows on and on,
And knows no end.

It is that love which is our assurance—the living secret of all recovery. Behind everything, God loves. Through all our fickleness and failure, God loves. It is as deep, the early writers tell us, as the foundation of the world. We cannot be sure of ourselves, but we can be sure of God. Our mistake lies in looking within ourselves for peace, instead of looking to Him. Feeling is the product of religious faith; it is not the ground of religious confidence. Our assurance for the future is not that we love God; it is that God loves us. What then can we rest in, with all our fickleness, but just that love that will not let us go; and in that faith and utter surrender to Him we find both peace and power.

I grasp Thy strength, make it mine own,
My heart with peace is blest.
I lose my hold and then comes down
Darkness and cold unrest.
Let me no more my comfort draw
From my frail hold on Thee;
In that alone rejoice with awe,
Thy mighty grasp of me.

[1] A. J. Gossip, *From the Edge of the Crowd*, 107.

Our Lord's Supreme Appeal

1 Cor. xi. 24.—'This is my body, which is broken for you.'

On that evening in the Upper Room, so long ago, Christ took bread, an ordinary piece of common loaf, and gave it to them, to each one of them in turn. How simple an action, yet how adequate a promise of everything that we can need. 'This,' said Christ, 'is my body,' everything I have, My most, My best, My all, the whole of Me, and it is all for you. By which, surely, He means that, in our frail endeavours and stumbling efforts to climb out of ourselves to something higher, we can count with absolute certainty on this, that Christ, aye and the God we see in Him, has thrown in wholeheartedly on our behalf all that He is, and every power that He possesses. This is My body, all I have; and you can draw and draw on Me, till there is nothing left.

So He claims: and has He not the right? For that was indeed the way He always lived. All day and every day He threw Himself away for strangers He would never see again; holding His life out, as Browning says, upon His hand for any man to take. Muhammad in the days of his power lived in a cottage in a row, and cobbled his own shoes, and drove his women frantic by his habit of giving away all the food in the house—'They were hungrier than we,' he would explain. Near his end he asked if there was any to whom he owed anything. 'Yes,' cried a voice, 'a few shillings to me;' and it was eagerly paid. 'I should have been so ashamed to face God with a debt,' the prophet said. And Christ, who seems always to have felt that everything He had was given Him, not for His own use at all, but to be spent on others, would have been ashamed to face God had He kept back anything from them. With all your giving, counsels Thoreau, 'see that you give yourself,' or else your gift is but a poor one. Christ always gave Himself.

He is the same Christ still. Calvin, speaking of His kingship, says that He reigns more for us than for Himself. What are power and dominion and the like to Jesus Christ, except in so far as He can use these on behalf of staggered, bungling, ineffectual souls? It is all yours, He says, looking at us. If there is any-

thing at all in Me that meets your needs, take it; I have no other use for it, it is your own.

And is there nothing? Follow Him down the streets, and note how faces lighten, and souls revive, and hopes rise out of deep graves, and tangled lives are straightened, and sheer impossibilities get done. Be sure that He stands to the characteristic marks He Himself gave—the blind see, and we are so blind to the Divine; the deaf hear, and we are so dull to the voice of God; the lepers are cleansed, and our souls are very sin-sick; the dead are raised, and our hearts seem quite cold and callous and dead to all appeals; the poor have the Gospel preached to them. A Gospel? Is it not that we need? In all Christ presses on us with such eagerness, is there nothing at all that we desire? This is My body, everything I have, and it is offered you.

Further, before He gave, Christ brake it. 'This is my body broken,' mangled, done to death, for you. And, so saying, this most audacious of believers rose to the summit even of His faith. For consider the circumstances! Everything was over, hope seemed out, it was quite clear now that it was to end in disaster. And Christ knew it, felt the chill from Calvary blowing upon Him; a few more hours, and He would have to face a gibbet. Yet He was unafraid, there was no tremor in His hands, no wavering of His eyes. If this is God's will for Me, it is right and well and altogether good; if this is what He chooses for Me, then somehow it is going to come this way. 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to me.' So He took bread, and brake it, as if saying, Remember the Cross. Many other things you may forget, the days when the crowds clamoured round Me offering Me a throne, the triumphs of the early times; but remember My shame, burn the Cross deep into your mind. For if you see it, you will not be able to resist Me; you too will feel the pull, and have to come to Me.

How do we meet that challenge? You remember how Mark Antony won over a whole hostile mob by drawing back the cloak from the dead form, and showing them the wounds of Cæsar:

I am no orator, as Brutus is;
. . . . .
For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech,
To stir men's blood: I only speak right on;
I tell you that which you yourselves do know,
Show you sweet Cæsar's wounds, poor poor dumb mouths,
And bid them speak for me.

I tell you, declares Christ with emphasis, you cannot see the Cross and go your way unwon.

Well, let us test it, let us try and see. As we look across the centuries at that Figure, so white and spent, fresh from the horror of the Roman scourging, do we not feel that here a long, long quest has ended and that the soul has found its home and rightful king? For that aching of youth to be done with all authority, that fretting of the age to shake off all governance, and to be our own masters, living out our own lives in our own way with no one to withstand us, has faded, has it not, into a very mean thing? We are not big enough as yet for the liberty we claimed: we are far from the day that Dante at last reached when he was granted crown and sceptre, and told that he could safely rule his life, and follow where his own desires might beckon. As things are, out on the high seas fierce currents sweep us where we have no wish to go, and thunderous billows, crashing against our vessel, batter it out of its course. And, though we throw our whole weight on it, the wheel will not obey us, but struggles and kicks like a living thing. We require hands, stronger and more skilled than our own, laid on ours. As Wordsworth cried to Duty:

Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
. . . . .
I supplicate for thy control.

And is not this One who would rule us well; aye, and teach us to rule ourselves, making a noble thing of life? 'I supplicate for Thy control.' Is it so, or are we too mean to feel the thrill of Christ's appeal? I know men, so He said, I know their chivalry. Let them see Me broken for them, and I win. Well, we do see Him. Does He win? Or has He pitched things too high for puny souls?

Or let us climb this little hill—how strangely dark it is!—towards these three crosses. No, not that one, nor that other, where they writhe,

poor souls, in agony; but to this centre one, where He hangs in a calm that makes even that shame sheer majesty. Stand here a moment. Elsewhere we forget about it all, but, face to face with Jesus and Him crucified, how is it now?

¶ Once far up the duckboard tracks to Paschendaele, in that wild land churned into a wilderness of shell-holes, like a tumbling, never-resting sea, I came on a dead laddie, lying all alone. Why, out of all the multitudes one saw he so affected me, I do not know. But he was Scottish, and he was young and very handsome, and somebody's dearest. And, somehow, the dead eyes seemed to look up into mine with solemn challenge; and the dead lips to cry aloud till my heart heard, 'This is my body, broken for you.' And there we had a communion service of a kind, just we three, the Lord Christ, the dead laddie, and my soul; and I swore that because he had died for us, please God, I would be worthier for that sacrifice.[1]

There's a little brae in Picardy,
  A weary brae to me.
Yet as often as I close my eyes
  Its grey-green slope I see.
The trench, the wire, the sunken road,
  Are stabbed deep in my head;
For near a hundred of the lads
  I found there, lying dead.

There's a little hill called Calvary,
  Where God's Son died for me.
What it is like I do not know,
  Its slope I'll never see.
Yet now, whene'er I think of it,
  Whene'er the word is said,
How clear that brae in Picardy,
  And the laddies lying dead!

Can we stand under the Cross and look, and turn upon our heel, and go our careless way? Do not forget the Cross, says Christ. I know that that will win you. This is My body, and look how it is broken!

¶ The death of Christ is that which most powerfully attracts the heart of man to God, and this because it is the strongest proof of love. Love kindles and calls forth love; 'We count that,' says John of Wessel, 'to be the most lovable which we know to be the most loving.' The love of Christ has achieved the greatest things, and hence must produce the most powerful effects; it has displayed the greatest devotedness, and consequently must possess the strongest attractive power.[1]

It is 'for you.' Luther declared that all religion lies in the pronouns. 'For you,' said Christ, and put it into all their hands. All of them were disappointing and heartbreaking; they had trooped into that very room churlishly, their faces hot with anger and with temper in their eyes, but not one was left out. And so, although we feel we have no claim, and that it cannot be for us, it is. Old John Duncan one day would not venture to the table of his Lord; he felt he was too unworthy, and was sitting miserably under the pulpit when he saw a girl break down and pass the cup untasted. Whereat, his fears all gone, the old saint cried to her in a carrying whisper, 'Take it, lassie, take it, it is for sinners,' and himself stretched out eager hands. It is for you, says Christ. This is My body, and it is broken, and it is all for you!

[1] A. J. Gossip, *From the Edge of the Crowd*, 290.

This in Remembrance

1 Cor. xi. 24.—'This do in remembrance of me.'

The man who wrote the Hymn of Charity could have wooed lovers of charmed speech by his words had he chosen, but his aim was to magnify Christ. In the first nine verses of this Epistle he names Jesus Christ nine times. As Michael Angelo wore a lamp on his cap to prevent his shadow falling upon the picture he was painting, so St Paul wore self-suppression: he preached not himself but Christ Jesus as Lord. So does the Supper itself preach one thing—remembrance of Jesus.

1. *A Feast of Remembrance.*—Our Lord clearly meant the Supper to be a memorial or remembrance of Himself. Nothing could be simpler or more human than His appointment of this Sacrament. Lifting the material of the Supper before Him, He bids His disciples make the simple act of eating and drinking the occasion of remembering Him. Just as a departing friend puts into our hands some simple souvenir and is glad to think that we

[1] Dora Greenwell, *The Covenant of Life*, 47.

shall treasure it for his sake, so did Christ on the eve of His death secure this one thing that His disciples should have a memento by which to remember Him.

¶ The Bishop's work in East London was finished; it was his last day; just once more he took his place in the familiar white tram-car; to his surprise the conductor asked him for his ticket, which is usually thrown away by the passenger. 'What do you want it for?' he asked. 'P'raps you won't be coming with me again,' said the man, 'and I should like to keep it for a remembrance.' The Bishop told him he should have something more than that, and afterwards gave him his photograph.[1]

There was high genius, indeed, in the simple token which Christ gave to His disciples, whereby their memory of Him should be kept quickly vibrant. And this may be said with all deepest reverence. The vivifying memento involved no long pilgrimage to holy places, nor was it what was costly beyond the resources of the poor, making Christianity either an esoteric cult or a privilege only of the rich. There have been relics that have been unique, the property of a remote or an almost exclusive site. But He took that which should be daily on the table of men's constant need: and as long as human hunger handled bread, the mystery of the sacrifice of Love Divine could never be forgotten.

¶ In the Highlands of Scotland, in a wild region, there is a spring at which Prince Albert once stopped to quench his thirst. The owner of the spring fenced it in and built a tasteful monument, making the waters flow into a basin of hewn stone, on which he placed an inscription. Every passing stranger stopping to drink at this fountain reads the inscription and recalls the memory of the noble prince whom it honours. Thus the spring is both a memorial and a blessing; it keeps in mind the great man, and it gives drink to the weary and the thirsty.[2]

2. *Remembrance of Christ's Death.*—What is it that we are to remember? It is 'the Lord's death.' That, according to the Apostolic testimony, was the event which the Feast was specially meant to commemorate. The same conclusion is forced upon us when we consider the institution of the Feast itself. It obviously points forward to Calvary. From beginning to end it is a parable and symbol of what was to happen there.

Our Lord's words contain unmistakable allusions to His death. Take, to begin with, the distinction He makes between body and blood: 'This is my body'; 'This is my blood.' Now, as Dr A. B. Bruce says, 'body and blood are one in life, and become separate things only by death; and not by every kind of death, but by one whose manner involves blood-shedding, as in the case of sacrificial victims.' Then, notice what Christ says about His body and His blood, and you will feel that it is His death, and nothing else, that He has in His mind. His body is to be 'given' for them; His blood is to be 'shed,' 'poured out' in their behalf. And, this blood which is to be shed is the 'blood of the covenant'—of 'the new covenant or testament,' says St Paul. Now, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews puts it, 'where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it'—so that the idea of death is involved in the very idea of a testament or covenant.

3. *The Importance of Christ's Death.*—The very fact that this Feast was specially instituted to call to mind Christ's death, implies that that death was of special and unique importance. In our Lord's own eyes His death was *the* act of transcendent importance. 'The shadow of the Cross,' according to Holman Hunt, lay across His life from first to last. It was to that Cross He hastened. That Cross was the baptism He had to be baptized with. It was only when He hung upon that Cross that He had accomplished His life's purpose and could cry: 'It is finished!' And when He asks to be remembered, it is not His birthday but His death-day that He asks His disciples to commemorate; though He did a great thing when He condescended to be born, He did a greater thing still, when, of His own free will, He hung upon the Cross. That, in our Lord's own thought, was His supreme and crowning work.

It is evident that our Lord did not regard His own death as defeat and ruin. That was how the disciples regarded it, that was how the chief priests and scribes regarded it, that was how the people at large regarded it; but that was not how Jesus Himself regarded it. He

[1] F. D. How, *Bishop Walsham How*, 176.
[2] S. Marriott.

would never have instituted a feast to commemorate His defeat and extinction! For remember this Feast was a joyous Feast, and it was not without reason that the Fathers of old gave it the name 'Eucharist'—the Thanksgiving. For though our Lord's flesh shrank and trembled at the Cross, His spirit triumphed in it. The Cross was not defeat and ruin. It was the Exodus—the great deliverance, the blessed emancipation which He was to accomplish. And so He marched to the Cross with the gait of a conqueror marching to his triumph. And it is His death on that Cross He bids His disciples remember.

¶ 'Blackness, darkness, and despair, and sorrow blotting out God's hand, and feebleness sinking without a stay: these are not failure. In these characters was written first the charter of our deliverance: these are the characters in which it is renewed.' [1]

Soldiers sometimes meet together to celebrate some great victory in which they had the honour to bear a share. But we never heard of any men assembling to celebrate their defeat. It is the anniversaries of triumph and crowning mercies that they like to celebrate. But our Lord said to His disciples: 'Remember My death, remember the day when My foes had Me, as it seemed, helpless, in their power and wreaked their wicked will upon Me, and numbered Me with the transgressors, and nailed Me to the tree. Remember My dying.' But why did our Lord say that? Is He an exception to the universal rule? No, Christ was no exception to the rule. This was no commemoration of defeat. Our Lord was celebrating His great victory—His crowning triumph.

He died upon the Cross He made,
Without a lip to bless:
He rose into a million hearts,
And this was His success.

4. *Christ's Death and Sin.*—The institution of the Feast shows that in our Lord's own eyes His death was an act of transcendent importance; a further examination of the narrative proves that in our Lord's eyes the transcendent importance of His death consisted in its bearing upon human sin. In the Cross we see God, in the person of His Son, dealing with human sin: not simply revealing the tragic issues of it, but dealing with it; bearing the shame of it; enduring the pains and penalties of it and securing deliverance from it. And that is why Christ bids His disciples remember His dying—not simply that they might be strengthened by remembering His courage, or warned by a revelation of human wickedness, or moved by evidence of the Divine Love. He bids them remember the Cross because on it their ransom was paid and their deliverance achieved. Notice what He says: 'This is my body, which is broken *for you*.' And again: 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many *unto remission of sins*.'

[1] J. Hinton, *The Mystery of Pain*.

¶ It is said that in Paris they still show an old State book in which were entered the taxes that every town and village had to pay to the government. Turn to the letter 'D' and you will find the name of a small town Domremy, the birthplace of Joan of Arc. You will see that the taxes are entered as usual, but across the page is written in red ink, 'Free for the Maid's sake.'

It is sometimes said that the Atonement is a Pauline doctrine. As a matter of fact, it is here embedded in the one and only rite Christ gave to His Church. It was Jesus Christ Himself who taught us to believe that He was dying for our sins, that He was dying to undo all that had separated us and was still separating us from the God and Father of our spirits. Let us believe that, let us meet our own fears and doubts with this great fact, that Jesus Christ has given us authority to say that God for His sake will forgive every penitent life its sin.

¶ 'I have taken,' said David Dickson, one of the great Covenanting divines, with his latest breath, 'all my good deeds, and all my bad deeds, and cast them in a heap before the Lord, and have betaken me to Jesus Christ, in whom I have full and sweet peace.'

Almightie Judge, how shall poor wretches brook
Thy dreadful look,
Able a heart of iron to appall,
When Thou shalt call
For ev'ry man's peculiar book?

What others mean to do I know not well;
Yet I heare tell
That some will turn Thee to some leaves therein
So void of sinne,
That they in merit shall excell.

But I resolve, when Thou shalt call for mine,
That to decline,
And thrust a Testament into Thy hand:
Let that be scann'd,
There Thou shalt finde my faults are Thine.[1]

Covenant

1 Cor. xi. 25.—'This cup is the new covenant in my blood' (R.V.).

WHATEVER the exact historical connection between the Passover and the Lord's Supper may be, there can be no doubt that spiritually they are closely akin. And the word which Christ uses here points to a fresh connection of thought or circle of ideas under which Holy Communion has to be considered. He introduced the word 'covenant' as He handed the cup of wine. It would appear to have been the 'cup of blessing,' as St Paul calls it, 'the cup after supper,' the cup which was drunk after the lamb had been eaten at the Passover meal. It brings with it a new set of associated ideas, and deepens the impressiveness of the sacred ordinance.

Most religions presuppose some form of covenant with the object of their worship. The idea fills and dominates the Old Testament. And thus Christ found a ready point of attachment, a foundation of rock on which He could build up His new order of truth. A covenant is a compact, an arrangement, an agreement, a contract between two persons or two parties, involving mutual privileges, conditions, obligations, promises. The Hebrew word appears to have the idea of cutting, and hence primitive contracts or covenants were made by the shedding of blood or the sacrifice of an animal.

¶ 'Covenants were ratified in different ways; sometimes, for instance, the contracting parties were held to be bound by eating salt together; sometimes by partaking together in a sacrificial meal; sometimes by passing between the divided pieces of slaughtered animals; and especially by the use, still prevalent in many parts of the world, of blood, as by each of the parties tasting each other's blood, or smearing himself with it, or by both jointly dipping their hands in the blood of a slaughtered animal.'[2]

The idea, therefore, of a covenant in blood would not appear strange and new to the apostles, nor occur to them as repugnant, as it does to the minds of men of the Western modern civilization. To us, however far from the ideal we fall, we know our word ought to be our bond, our 'yea,' yea, and our 'nay,' nay.

The Old Testament abounds with illustrations of varied kinds of covenant. In Genesis we have Abram's covenant with God which is confirmed by Abram's passing between the divided pieces of an animal. The covenant is made by God in promising to give him the land; the obligation was on God's side. In First Samuel we read: 'Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword, and his bow and his girdle.' These are but illustrations. But the greatest was the Covenant at Sinai, when the escaped Israelites became formally the people of Jehovah, and Jehovah became the God of Israel. Great and wonderful promises were made to Israel so long as the nation kept the Divine will with obedient loyalty. Disobedience was threatened with punishment; loyalty was promised the favour and blessing of Jehovah. The terms of the covenant touch all life, religious, moral, economic; and in it lies the essence of Old Testament religion. The history of Israel is the story how they found, as we find, that it is far easier to be ritually correct than morally good or spiritually holy. The great prophets had for their main work the task of calling the people back to morality and an obedience of the heart. For six centuries the story of this tragedy runs on—a story of sad waywardness and unfaithfulness, alternated with moments of repentance, return, reform. But the prophets never spoke without announcing that there was always hope if Israel would return and keep the covenant. But it was not to be; Israel would not accept the offer.

A hundred years later Jeremiah, living in a time of reformation under Josiah, and catching a gleam of hope, announced that a new covenant would be contracted: 'I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.' The new covenant was to be a spiritual one, an experimental and universal knowledge of God, a covenant of pardon, complete and sure. Jeremiah never saw it realized, but he knew that every promise of God is an oath and a covenant. For he had learnt in the shocks

[1] Herbert. [2] S. R. Driver.

and changes of his life the unfailing pity of Him with whom he had been privileged to have fellowship and hold 'dialogues.'

It is impossible to suppose that Christ had no reference to the promises made through Jeremiah, and, through them, to the scene at Sinai. His Apostles, at least, so understood His words, 'the new covenant in my blood.' The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls Him the new Moses, mediating a better covenant, founded on better promises. The Cross was in His view, though none of His disciples saw it in the Upper Room. But He saw that His blood was to be the sacrificial blood in which the 'new covenant' was to be sealed, confirmed, ratified. The bonds broken under the old covenant were to be re-knit under the new covenant. The cup is the pledge, the symbol, of that new bond, And every time we drink the cup we are renewing the covenant which God has offered to all men in and through Christ.

We are forced to ask as we present ourselves: Why was Jesus compelled to make His self-sacrifice?

1. Jesus came to unite God and man, to restore the broken fellowship, to open a way of access by which man could find the Heart of God. He came—but He was 'sent'—sent by the Father. He came of His own grace; and in loyal, unswerving obedience He accomplished the work for which He was 'sent.' His death was the climax of His work, for it was no mere martyrdom, but a voluntary submission, and by its voluntariness His death was transfigured into a self-sacrifice. He loved and therefore He gave Himself to death. Love was the constraining motive.

2. His work gains its unique value from His Person. He was 'without sin,' and therefore separate from men. He was the 'only begotten Son of God,' one with the Father in His eternal love and pity for sinners. He was 'God made manifest in the flesh,' God incarnate, the God-man. It is the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ which makes the guilt of His death so awful as a crime and so glorious as a self-offering for men. He laid down His life that a covenant of friendship might be riveted between God and man. It was 'unto the remission of sins,' because it was sin which had destroyed that fellowship.

And was there, then, no other way
For God to take?—I cannot say;
I only bless Him day by day
Who saved me through my Saviour.

3. But when we take the cup and accept all that it is a symbol of, are we not, as it were, signing our side of the covenant, asking that our names may be put down—'Set down my name, sir'—and promising to fulfil the conditions? We ask to receive 'the innumerable benefits which by His precious blood-shedding He hath obtained for us,' and we take upon ourselves the obligations of discipleship. Christ purchased us for His service, and we become the servants and sons of God.

And how shall we go away from the feast? We must go *as covenanters*. There must be something about us akin to the Scottish covenanters when they emerged from Greyfriars churchyard, having entered into holy bond and covenant with the Lord. There must be something in our very demeanour telling the world that we have been at a great tryst, and our lives must be confident in the glorious Ally with whom the covenant has been made. There must be nothing dubious in our stride. Our courage must be kingly, as though we have imperial friendships, and as though in very truth we 'walk with God.'

We must go *as crusaders* too. We must leave the table as the covenanted knights left King Arthur's table, 'to ride abroad, redressing human wrong,' and to labour for the creation of conditions like unto those whose fair pattern we have seen in the mount.

¶ There is a great word in one of Kingsley's letters which was written when the condition of the people was burdening him with its ever-deepening tragedy. And this is what he wrote: 'If I had not had the communion at church to-day to tell me that Jesus *does* reign, I should have blasphemed in my heart, I think, and said, "The devil is king!"' But he left the feast, he assures us, braced and strengthened, and with 'a wild longing to do something for his fellow men!'[1]

The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar:
Who follows in His train?

[1] J. H. Jowett, *The School of Calvary*, 108.

The Forward Look

1 Cor. xi. 26.—'For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.'

THERE is nothing more notable in the memorial supper than the perfect confidence of Jesus in the future. No trace of doubt can be detected in Him—no slightest misgiving seems to have crossed His heart—as He looked away from His own little company down the ages that were yet to be. Like all great moments in our earthly life, the Lord's Supper has a two-fold reference. It reaches back into the dear dead days; it stretches forward to the untrodden future. And one of the singular things about our Lord which has attracted the eyes of every age is that at the Table, looking forward, He was possessed with a quiet and perfect confidence. 'This do in remembrance of me,'—then He was to be loyally and lovingly remembered. 'Ye do shew the Lord's death till he come'—then His memory was to last while the world lasted. In loving hearts, right through the ages, on and on till the last trumpet sounded, Christ never doubted that His name would live in warm and powerful memorial. Had He looked with quiet confidence across the past, it would not have arrested us so much. For all the past had been leading up to Him, and He had perfectly fulfilled the will of God. But that with equal confidence, unsullied and serene, He should have anticipated all coming time, is something that has always stirred the Church.

Of course it is possible to minimize this thought, as it is possible to belittle everything about Christ. We are told that He was thinking only of His own here, and that His coming was expected in a year or two. There was no vision of the coming centuries—it was a word spoken to the disciples only, till in a dozen years or so their Lord should come again. Now, there is much to be said for that view, or thinking man would never have advanced it. But deeper than any arguments in favour of it is its injustice to the *spirit* of the scene. And once we have grasped the spirit of the scene, and turn to the life of Christ for confirmation of it, we see that it is something more than sentiment which finds the centuries in the heart of Jesus here. We learn from some of His most familiar parables how slowly and gradually the Kingdom was to come. It could no more be hurried on than one could hasten the growing of the mustard-seed. We learn, too, that Jesus had an eye which ranged away beyond the bounds of Israel: 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.' It is that far-ranging and large spirit which you must carry into the Upper Room. An hour of high intensity like this was certain to be an hour of vision. If ever Christ saw imperially and magnificently, and we know from other sources that He did, would it not be on the eve before that day which was to close His earthly ministry by death? We believe, then, that in the Upper Room Jesus had an eye for all the ages. And the singular thing is that with a range like that, over the illimitable fields of time, Christ should have shown such quiet and perfect confidence.

It is that wonder which is deepened as we recall the season when it was exhibited. Do we not feel afresh the marvel of such confidence on that betrayal night? *Now* it was evident beyond dispute what was moving in the heart of Judas. Now at last came leaping to the surface the treachery that had been brooded on in secret. And if this was the issue of the years of fellowship—this unutterable malice of to-day—was it likely there would be a bright to-morrow? And it was then, in such a bitter hour, when He well might have lost His faith in human loyalty, that He looked forward with confidence unquenched to the loyal remembrance of the ages. Christ knew, in the quiet of that evening, what was involved in the treachery of Judas. Already He saw the shadow of the Cross and heard the evil voices crying 'Crucify him.' Yet with so much to drive Him to despair—so much to suggest to Him that He had failed—with a heart as calm as any summer sea He looked away to the loyalty of time. 'This do in remembrance of me: ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.'

If the Supper calls upon us to look to the past, it bids us also look forward; it calls us to wait 'till he come.' It has what Meredith names 'the rapture of the forward view.' We go forward to keep a tryst. 'We are saved by hope.' But the hope with which Christ inspires us is no idle longing. It is a 'living hope,' an active energy. It has nothing in common with

the expression 'I hope so' which we often hear and use. The Biblical hope has the same ring as the certainty of Christ. It is an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast. It was for the hope set before Him of those followers whom no man could number that the Christ endured the Cross. And our hope summons to readiness, to watchfulness, to endurance. It sets before us an object on which to fix our gaze. We live 'for the future in the distance'; we journey

> On to the bound of the waste,
> On to the City of God.

We keep the feast now that we may enter the City by and by, and there eat and drink in the banqueting-hall of Divine Love.

We are all familiar with Watts' picture of Hope—the woman bending over a lyre. But it is interesting to find Veronese in his Holy Family departing from the usual fashion of making Hope young and joyous. 'That Young Hope,' says Ruskin, 'is vain hope—passing away in a rain of tears; but the Hope of Veronese is aged, assured, remaining when all else has been taken away'; 'she has a black veil on her head' in contrast to the white dress of Faith. This is the Hope of St Paul's familiar words: 'For tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience and experience hope.' No, Hope is not a raw recruit thoughtlessly dashing forward to capture some impossible position; Hope is a veteran, tried, tempered, tutored in many a hard-won field; one who has known something of disappointment, disillusion, defeat, yet sticks to the colours, and by experience has grown wise. It is a virtue begotten of experience and not ignorance. After this manner the Lord's Supper appeals to hope, for it is a memorial of the firm base on which our faith in Christ's promise can stand assured. Hope's assurance is founded not on an 'if' or a 'perhaps,' but on the immutability of Him who has never failed. If we doubt God's promise in Christ we make Him a liar. He is the God of Hope. And with this assurance we keep the supper 'till he come.'

The words with which Christ spoke of His 'coming again' are full of strange mystery. Perhaps no key to the labyrinth will ever be discovered till the great fact itself is its own interpretation; and, like many other words of Christ, the explanation will lie in the experience. For the immediate purpose we need to note only one fact, which emerges clear and distinct out of all the uncertainty and mystery of the future. That fact is that Christ and His disciples will finally be gathered into one Home. He will come to them, and they will go to Him. Because He lives, they will live also. That blissful reunion will surely exceed our dreams. We are to eat and drink at His table, assured that He is giving us 'eternal life,' which, beginning in time, cannot be terminated at death, but that He will 'preserve our bodies and souls unto everlasting life.' We may have to be agnostic about the details of that future life; but our ignorance does not paralyse our hope.

Our hopes are our aspirations, and by these we are saved: not by what we are, but by what we are becoming. The test of our character lies here, not attainments but aspirations. ''Tis not what man does which exalts him, but what man would do.' We strive and fail. Our success lies in refusing to fail, and persisting on in spite of every obstacle and discouragement. We redeem our failures by our hope. We long to achieve the work the Master has set us, so that we may be unashamed at His coming.

The supper is a prophecy. In the far off past Christ trysted with His friends for a brief hour, and He told them of another tryst in the future. Many a tryst hath He kept since then; but one final one awaits us all, when separation shall no longer be a possibility. The supper comes with its promises, its gifts, to reburnish our hope. If it be a memorial, it is also a prophecy; if it be a consecration, it is also a communion, which need know no break 'till he come.' [1]

> And thus that dark betrayal night
> With the last advent we unite,
> By one blest chain of loving rite,
> Until He come.

Self-examination

1 Cor. xi. 28.—'But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.'

In his statement of the Lord's Supper St Paul lifts it out of the particular into the general,

[1] E. J. Ives, *The Pledges of His Love*, 137.

so that it applies not merely to the special case of the Corinthians, but to all who meet to remember Jesus at His Table. He gathers up all the directions he had previously given into one general rule: 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat.'

These words apply to us as forcibly as to the Church of Corinth. For one thing the Sacrament gives us an occasion for a public profession of faith, and that is not to be done lightly. For the sake of the Church, and for the sake of the world outside the Church, and most of all, for the sake of the name and cause of Christ, we must not take on ourselves obligations that we cannot fulfil. For our own sake also, for the sake of our own spiritual life, we must not lightly and carelessly partake of the mystery; for we would only be blunting our soul and taking the edge off all spiritual susceptibility. Because the Corinthians had not examined themselves, had not really considered the sacredness of the act, and the true meaning of the Sacrament, their religion had lost hold of their life.

1. Now the chief thing is that we should examine ourselves, and so be prepared to receive the blessing of Communion. There is no emphasis laid on any particular method of examination. St Paul does not give any particular directions, does not draw up a practical scheme of preparation at all. Any such rules would become formal, and might be a burden to the over-sensitive, scrupulous soul, and would only soothe the soul of the mere formalist into duller and smugger self-satisfaction. The truth is, that there are no formal rules which are of universal applicability. The things which are demanded are sincerity and seriousness. It has to be remembered, too, that self-examination has some dangers, such as a morbid introspection which is ever anxiously considering symptoms of self, and which deprives us of simple faith and humble service. Religion can have too much of what Shelley calls 'the dark idolatry of self,' which by idle self-reproach and brooding on the past can destroy not only present peace and joy, but also all right action towards amendment and obedience.

¶ Jonathan Edwards, in his *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, has these wise and sane words: 'Although self-examination be a duty of great use and importance and by no means to be neglected, yet it is not the principal means by which the saints do get satisfaction of their good estate. Assurance is to be obtained not so much by self-examination as by action. The Apostle Paul sought assurance chiefly this way, even by forgetting the things that were behind and reaching forth to those things that were before, pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He obtained assurance of winning the prize more by running than by considering.'

At the same time we are missing an opportunity for the deepening of our faith and the strengthening of our life in all good, if we do not use this occasion for true self-scrutiny. If we remember that no methods are prescribed and sacred, we will avoid all the dangers, and will receive the undoubted blessing that comes to all earnest endeavour after self-examination.

¶ Cromwell, in a letter to his favourite daughter Mary, warns her against 'the dangers of a departing heart.' And those of us who are afraid of becoming hard and dull to life's highest appeals are glad of a time when we may know whether things beneath the surface of our lives are as sound and active as we would like them to be, and as we believe they once were. Our Lord once warned His disciples that their secret thoughts and feelings and ambitions all had a way of working themselves out in obvious signs; that 'what they whispered in secret in the hidden chamber of their heart would one day be as plain to everybody as though they were shouting it from the housetops.' And the converse is equally true. If a hidden thing tends to have an outward expression, an outward thing is proof of an inner bias or disposition. So that what we do is the reflection of what we are. In the Day of Judgment, our Lord has told us, we are to be judged not by what we thought, or by what we imagined, or by what we dreamed, but by what we did. Paderewski once confessed that if he allowed *one* day to pass without severe practice, he himself was aware of the difference. If he were to allow *two* days to pass, the experts would know. And if he allowed *a week* to pass, everybody would know.[1]

By all means use some time to be alone!
Salute thyself! See what thy soul doth wear.[2]

[1] J. A. Hutton, *There They Crucified Him*, 22.
[2] Herbert.

2. The one central thought which St Paul gives us in this passage as the subject for self-examination is whether we are able to discern the Lord's body in the Sacrament. He offered it to the Corinthians as the test for them, one which would effectually prevent the scandals that arose through their looking upon it as merely a common meal. If they had discerned the Lord's body they would not have been so profane as to desecrate the Sacrament. They had forgotten that the bread and wine were meant to remind them of Christ's death of love for the world's life.

If we are anxious because in our self-examination we have found ourselves utterly unworthy to sit at the Lord's Table, that is no reason why we should exclude ourselves. Our one plea is our need and our desire, not our merit or our desert. The highest height we could reach would not give us the right to be there. Jeremy Taylor gives as the first ejaculation to be used on Sacrament day: 'Lord, if I lived innocently I could not have deserved to receive the crumbs that fall from Thy Table. How great is Thy mercy who hast feasted me with the bread of virgins, with the wine of angels, with manna from heaven!'

¶ Oh, foolish humility! Who does not see that thou art not worthy? At what time dost thou await worthiness? Do not await it; for thou wilt be just as worthy at the end as at the beginning. For with all our just deeds, we shall never be worthy of it. But God is He who is worthy, and makes us worthy with His worth. His worth grows never less. What ought we to do? Make us ready on our part, and observe His sweet commandment. For did we not do so, giving up communion, in such wise believing to flee from fault, we should fall into fault.[1]

If our self-examination makes us doubt not merely of having due preparation for the Sacrament, but of even having a true interest in Christ at all, what then? The Westminster Larger Catechism with great wisdom and tenderness states the case, and answers that one who doubts of his interest in Christ 'in God's account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it; and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ and to depart from iniquity.' If our self-examination reveals to us our unworthiness and sinfulness, and leads us thus to commit ourselves more completely to Christ, it is the best preparation possible for the Lord's Supper.

[1] V. D. Scudder, *Saint Catherine of Siena as Seen in Her Letters*, 205.

The Lord's Body

1 Cor. xi. 29.—'Not discerning the Lord's body.'

1. When the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the Church of Corinth, there was a double presence of the Master, and it was because the Corinthian Christians discerned neither kind that they earned St Paul's censure, and ate and drank condemnation to themselves. Before our Lord left this world and ascended unto the Father He promised that He would be always with His people. He would depart from sight and be realized by faith; absent in the flesh, He would be present in the Spirit. Whenever His evangel is preached He wields His mystic power and draws men unto Himself. He moves before His disciples in the royal way of the Holy Cross, constraining them to service, to suffering and to death, and amid the innumerable providences of common life He guides and supports the soul. Chiefly, however, is Christ near us in the Holy Communion. It has been the misfortune of Christian people to differ widely about the doctrine of the Sacrament. It has been their happiness to find that under many forms the Master has revealed Himself to the faith of His disciples. It was because those Corinthians treated this sacred rite as if it were a common supper-table, and did not wish to see the Holy Grail, that they were guilty of profanity. Not discerning the Lord's body in the bread and wine, they denied the spiritual presence of Christ.

2. But our Lord was also present in that room after a more visible fashion than with the symbols of His body and blood. While a few rich men enjoyed the meal which preceded the Sacrament in the early Church, and was called on this occasion, surely as by irony, the love-feast, others sat at the same table poor and starving. They were humble persons whom Christ had called into His Kingdom, or whose souls Christ had made free. One had escaped for a brief hour from bondage to celebrate his spiritual emancipation; another had left his squalid room to realize his heavenly citizenship.

It was amazing blindness. Had their prosperous brethren never heard from the gospel tradition how Christ went to dinner with the rich Pharisee, and received neither oil for His head nor water for His feet? How, on the night of the first Lord's Supper, when no one else would discharge the task, He washed His disciples' feet? One is amazed that no subtle suggestion of Christ touched their minds, that no impulse came to these supercilious Corinthians, moving them to rise and serve their poorer brethren.

Without any doubt, and apart from any doctrine, they had the body and blood of Christ within reach of their hands and they discerned it not.

¶ One of the most delightful stories of antiquity describes how Ulysses, after his long wanderings and sore toil, returned at length to his own home. He came not as his friends had last seen him, nor as he really was. He wore the appearance of age, and was disguised as a beggar; unknown by friend or foe, he sat in the lowest place, and was neglected at his own board. Two only recognized him in spite of every change—his dog, by that instinct of affection which is often surer than reason; the other his nurse, who knew him when she washed his feet and saw the scar which the wild boar had made as Ulysses followed the chase on Mount Parnassus.[1]

3. No one can read the Gospels without learning that Christ was not only pleased to wear human flesh but that He identified Himself with the humblest. His connection with the poor was more than an accidental association, it was a deliberate intention; it was not that He loved others less, it was because the need of the poor was greater. Christ foresaw two things clearly, the demand of the weary and heavy-laden world, and the devotion that would gather round Himself. So He brought it to pass that the service ready to be given Him should be rendered to the suffering world. When He incarnates Himself afresh in the body of every one who is in straits, and assures us in His most solemn parables that whatever we do to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the sick, and the captive, is done to Him, He endows the unfortunate with an inexhaustible inheritance.

Sacred art loved to depict the Pietà, when the body of Christ, which had been worn out in service, was taken down from the Cross and made ready for burial. St John, His friend, holds the drooping head, and Mary Magdalene bends over the weary feet, which once more she washes with her tears, this time not from dust, but from blood; while the Virgin looks into the face which for the first time does not respond to her love. That happened once long ago, that will never happen again, for He who was dead is alive for evermore, with all power in Heaven and in earth. His heavenly body is beyond the reach of the nails and the spear, it is in the midst of the throne, a Lamb as He once was slain. What happens every day is that Christ's earthly body is attacked and wounded—sometimes in our great cities, where men and women are perishing for lack of bread, or for lack of love; and sometimes where Christians are persecuting and hating one another.

> One more flint upon His way,
> Another thorn upon His head;
> Another mock by where He tread,
> Another nail, another Cross,
> All that you are is that Christ's loss.[1]

¶ 'Once a Christian,' said Lacordaire, 'the world did not vanish from my eyes, it rather assumed larger proportions, as I myself did. I began to see therein a noble sufferer needing help. I could imagine nothing comparable to the happiness of ministering to it under the eye of God, with the help of the Cross and the Gospel of Christ!'

Discover Christ's body in the world around, and you transfigure the world. It is not then so many people to be used, or criticized, or injured, or studied, or put in statistics; it is so many to be served—from the slow child and the hot-tempered person in your own house, to the desolate life next door, and the multitude which has lost hope. The body of Christ is not merely in the sacrament on the Holy Table, it is in the hospitals and in the slums; it is in the oppressed and in the friendless. In them Christ waits to be ministered to every day, and our ministry is the measure of our love.

4. If the great conception of communion is to be realized, it must begin somewhere, and the early Church believed that the salvation of the

[1] J. Watson, *The Inspiration of our Faith*, 277.

[1] Masefield.

world waited on the spread of the Church until it would embrace within its fellowship all the peoples of the earth. As the first believers lived together, caring not for worldly position and ready to sacrifice their personal possessions, they felt that they were setting an example to the world of the nature of the Kingdom which Jesus endeavoured to establish. The Church should ever stand before men as a community characterized by gracious sympathy with the weak, in which class distinctions and racial differences are forgotten, and where all are brothers because they acknowledge their loyalty to the great Elder Brother.

As we gather round the Lord's Table making profession of a personal faith, we proclaim our unity in Christ. No father who loves his child will be envious if in the course of the years his son attains a greater eminence than he himself has attained. A brother rejoices in his brother's progress, and does all he can to make the way to further advance easy. Where true love is, then envy is forgotten. When one within the family circle falls on evil days the family spirit sustains him.

¶ Mr Montague, in his stirring novel, *Rough Justice*, tells the story of a group of men from Oxford and Cambridge who found themselves in a company of recruits in the opening days of the World War. Because years before he had done a little soldiering, one of the others, a man with no education, and whose occupation had been a very lowly one, was placed in charge, and the men knew how weak their corporal was, and his badly given commands were carelessly carried out. The section espied the sergeant-major coming over the training-ground to the place where they were drilling, and they knew that the weakness of their well-meaning corporal would be soon found out and that there would be no promotion for him but rather degradation of position, so one of the men passed the word along that they should not fail their leader while the sergeant-major was at hand. In a moment the morale of the section changed. With minds alert, determined to do their very best, they went through their drill as they had never done before until the sergeant-major passed on, well satisfied that the corporal was suitable for promotion.[1]

Surely there are few who in the hour of Communion do not become duly penitent as they remember their failure and disloyalty to the bonds of brotherhood, but many forget to treat their sins in the true light, as a wrong done to the Master of the Feast, not discerning His suffering body.

[1] A. Chisholm, *High Roads and Cross Roads*, 65.

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